00066007

00066007

Digitized with financial assistance from
Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj
on 20 February, 2020

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

IN

SOUTH WALES

NEVERN.-CARNINGLY IN THE DISTANCE

Highways and Byways in South Wales

66067
at
S64

BY A. G. BRADLEY
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS · BY
FREDERICK L. GRIGGS

London
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1903

All rights reserved

RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED,
BREAD STREET HILL, E.C., AND
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

B10 / H'69
66007

PREFACE

A FEW prefatory remarks to this book appear to me to be almost imperative if only to explain some apparent sins of omission, or, to come at once to the point and the singular number, the omission of Glamorgan. The title of the volume, it is true, involves it in no particular geographical obligations; but I should not like to incur even a suspicion of making light of the abounding attractions, natural and historical, of this great county, or of being ignorant of them.

The plain fact, however, is that the large area of South Wales, when measured by the exigencies of my space, rendered the omission of a portion of it absolutely inevitable.

Monmouthshire, having been for so long technically, if illogically, outside Wales, lent itself to excision at once without the necessity for comment, and relieved me of part of the difficulty.

For the rest, Glamorganshire, so greatly scarred and altered over much of its surface by the very industries that have made it wealthy, and so full too of population attracted from other regions by its coal and iron, would seem less likely to attract the visitor travelling on our lines than the more primitive and pastoral districts.

Then again, the educated classes from the Glamorgan and Monmouth centres form in my experience a majority of the comparatively few outside wanderers who find pleasure in the particular highways and byways I have endeavoured to describe. So on that score alone they will, perhaps, acquit me of remissness in confining myself to regions whither so many South Walians themselves repair for rest, recreation, or change. And, moreover, they will no doubt feel with me that Glamorgan and Monmouth would alone make a sufficiently full subject for an entire volume on the lines of this one.

Lastly, having this opportunity before me, I should like to seize it and record my gratitude to the many friends and acquaintances of all degrees in South Wales who in various ways facilitated my endeavours during the all too short six months I spent in the country in the immediate preparation of this work.

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER I 1

CHAPTER II 37

CHAPTER III 67

CHAPTER IV 98

CHAPTER V 130

CHAPTER VI 169

CHAPTER VII 199

CHAPTER VIII 234

PAGE

CHAPTER IX 256

CHAPTER X 284

CHAPTER XI 324

CHAPTER XII 364

CHAPTER XIII 394

INDEX 411

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

NEVERN, CARNINGLY IN THE DISTANCE (*Photogravure*) *Frontispiece*

SUNRISE 1

HAY 3

HERGEST RIDGE 6

COTTAGE AT NEW RADNOR 14

FROM THE CASTLE HILL, NEW RADNOR 19

IN RADNOR FOREST 25

THE ITHON AT PEN-Y-BONT 28

ON THE WYE 37

THE WYE NEAR ABEREDW 50

PONT-AR-ITHON 77

ON THE UPPER WYE 80

CWM ELAN 87

THE HEAD OF YRFON, CAMRAU'R BLEIDDIAID 118

HEAD OF THE TOWY 122

IN THE VALE OF TOWY 130

TOWARDS CRICKHOWEL FROM THE BWLCH 132

CWMPENLLYDAN 133

PAGE

THE BRÂN VALLEY 140

CARMARTHEN VANS FROM TRECASTLE 144

LLANDILO—MORNING 151

DYNEVOR FROM LLANDILO BRIDGE 156

CERRIG CENNIN CASTLE 161

CERRIG CENNIN—DISTANT VIEW 163

THE CENNIN VALLEY 165

THE CENNIN BROOK 167

KIDWELLY 169

DRYSLWYN 172

PONT-AR-COTHI 175

NANTGARREDIG 179

LLANSTEPHAN 189

KIDWELLY CASTLE 192

KIDWELLY CHURCH 194

ST. ISHMAELS 196

LLANSTEPHAN CASTLE 197

LLANSTEPHAN FROM ST. ISHMAELS 199

THE COTHI NEAR PUMPSAINT 201

THE LAMPETER ROAD 204

BETWEEN PUMPSAINT AND LAMPETER 207

LLAN-DEWI-BREFI 217

TREGARON 221

PONTRHYDFENDIGAIAD 225

YSTRADFFLUR 227

THE VALE OF AYRON 234

STUDY NEAR TALSARN 237

SUNSET AND MOONRISE AT CILIAU-AERON 242

PAGE

ABERAYRON 245

LLECHRYD BRIDGE 256

LLANYBYTHER 258

LLANDYSSIL 262

PENTRECOURT 264

THE TEIFY ABOVE HENLLAN 267

THE TEIFY FALLS AT HENLLAN 270

HENLLAN BRIDGE 271

CENARTH BRIDGE 273

IN TEIFY-SIDE 275

KILGERRAN CASTLE 278

NEWPORT BAY 284

CARDIGAN BRIDGE 285

NEVERN 291

NEWPORT CASTLE 294

NEWPORT 296

FISHGUARD 298

CARREG WASTED 312

STRUMBLE HEAD 314

ABERMAUR, NEAR MATHERY 315

RUINS OF BISHOP'S PALACE, ST. DAVID'S 324

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, ST. DAVID'S 326

ST. DAVID'S CATHEDRAL 331

SOLVA 333

HAVERFORDWEST 335

TREFGARNE 339

LLAWHADEN CASTLE 341

LLAWHADEN—DISTANT VIEW 343

PAGE

ST. GOWAN'S HEAD 347

ST. GOWAN'S CHAPEL 349

PEMBROKE CASTLE 351

PEMBROKE CASTLE—GATEWAY 353

CAREW CASTLE 356

TENBY 361

NEAR BRECON 364

BETWEEN LLANDOVERY AND TRECASTLE 367

THE USK AT VENYVACH 370

BRECON BRIDGE 386

CRAIG CERRIG GLEISIAD 389

TALYLLYN VILLAGE AND PEN CADER RANGE 398

PEN-Y-FAN AND LLANGORSE LAKE FROM THE SLOPES OF TROED . 403

ROUTE MAP . . . . . *End of Volume*

Sunrise.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

IN

SOUTH WALES

CHAPTER I

NOWHERE in the south has that border line which Henry the Eighth's Commissioners traced through the turbulent Lordships of the Welsh Marches, for a perpetual boundary between England and Wales, the same significance as it has to the north of the Severn. The ruddy blush of the Herefordshire landscape, with its snowy orchards and long-horned, white-faced cattle, far over-leaps the Brecon and Radnor border. While, on the other hand, the mellow West Saxon burr takes on the Welsh inflexion, far to the eastward of the Welsh frontier, and

constitutes a vernacular—and is to my thinking the most lucid and pleasing of all our English dialects, which is common to the borderers on both sides of the line. It is quite certain that the Joneses and Williamses who swarm upon the English side, nearly as thickly as upon the other, would not dream of regarding themselves as Welshmen. It is very doubtful if the Joneses and the Williamses in the neighbouring parishes of Brecon and Radnor have any pronounced feelings whatever in the matter of Welsh nationality. As all were for centuries the fellow subjects of a Lord Marcher and owed no allegiance either to Welsh princes or to English kings, this indifference is not surprising, and as a matter of fact, these borderers for a considerable distance on both sides of the line are practically the same people. Kington, for instance, is a typical English market town of the more modest and wholly agricultural type. For the last four hundred years, speaking broadly, it has been in Herefordshire. For an equal period prior to that it was part of a Welsh Marcher Lordship, and had its castle not only as a defence against the mountain levies of the Welsh princes, but as a warning to the Earls of Hereford and other illustrious and greedy potentates, that it had no part or lot in the kingdom of England, and that its proprietor owed allegiance to no man but the Sovereign, and very little even to him. In the dim times before that again Kington was in the South-East corner of the Welsh kingdom of Powys. And the reason I have fallen on this somewhat obscure townlet for an illustration of the point I was dealing with, is the sufficient one that I propose to make it my starting point for South Wales. I admit that this is an unconventional proceeding. No paterfamilias bound for any given spot in what we inaccurately call the southern portion of the Principality, would launch his household thither by such a route. He would find himself in a *cul-de-sac*, with the Radnor mountains barring all further progress save by steep roads. The best route to South Wales, from the tourist's point of view, is by the London and North-Western railroad from

the Craven Arms to Llandrindod and Builth Junction, whence he can branch out in various directions; or, if coming from the south, he may take train from Hereford up the Wye valley by Hay to the *Three Cocks* Junction and there make his choice of routes.

But in these pages we have no problems of transport to consider, and I want to go through the heart of Radnorshire at once, a simple achievement in a single day either by trap or

Hay.

cycle, and one that I am quite sure no one with eyes to see and senses to feel, should they elect to follow in my steps some day, will have cause to regret.

Now Radnor enjoys a unique distinction among English and Welsh counties in having by very much the smallest population for its area, which, though not remarkably limited, contains fewer inhabitants than many a good sized country town, to wit, about twenty thousand. An old saw, familiar to every Welsh borderer for this last two hundred years or more, disposes of

seventeenth century Radnor in somewhat summary and scathing fashion:—

> "Radnorsheer, poor Radnorsheer,
> Never a park and never a deer,
> Never a squire of five hundred a year,
> But Richard Fowler of Abbey Cwmhir."

One can easily imagine that a county so sparsely occupied in these populous days, did not run much to deer parks or long rent rolls in those.

In former days men seemed to drop naturally into verse when they found themselves among the Welsh, and the above lines are said to have emanated from a disgusted Commissioner appointed by the Parliament after the Civil War to assess the redemption fines for Royalist estates. The Fowlers were English merchants who had just bought the Cwmhir property, and were, I think, on the Parliamentary side and of course non-assessable.

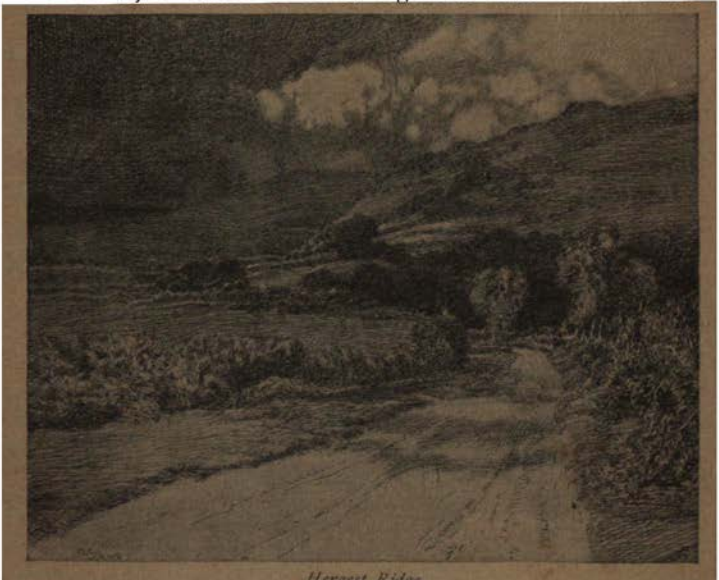
The strange part of the business, however, is that Radnor gives one so little idea of its extreme sterility in human life. There is a great wilderness tract in its centre, to be sure, but not so wide-reaching as to suggest any eccentricity in the matter of census returns, while the English side of the county looks quite well filled, and has a reasonable number of gentlemen's seats. But the simple truth is there are no towns to speak of in the county, nor yet any mining or manufacturing centres. Radnorshire, as a matter of fact, has about the normal average population of most of England in the Middle Ages; and people who have contracted the not unnatural notion that two or three millions scattered over the face of the kingdom meant something like a howling wilderness, would be surprised to find what a considerable show a very small agricultural community when left wholly to themselves can make on a large area.

But this is bordering on pedantry. Radnorshire will appeal very much more to the ordinary mortal through its pre-eminent physical beauty. If it were rated among English counties,

only Devonshire short of the Far North, and excluding seacoast scenery, could pretend to the same class, and even that most delectable of southern English counties would be sorely pressed in the competition, and I know both very intimately. The higher hills of Radnor mostly approach, or just surpass, the level of 2,000 feet, an altitude which gives that extra and satisfying distinction one misses in half the elevation; and when furthermore their sides or summits are riven into fantastic outcrops of cliff and crag, as is often here the case, one gets at times an extremely good imitation of mountain scenery. No turf is greener and fresher than that which clothes the famous sheep pastures of Radnor. Nor are any streams clearer or more buoyant than those which, plashing from its high solitudes, slip down by mill and homestead, by brake and woodland, to fill the channels of the Lugg and Arrow, the Ithon and the Wye. Indeed when one remembers that the latter river, throughout the most beautiful forty miles of its almost matchless course, is either within the county or forms its boundary, little more need be said as to the claims of a region that few strangers ever set foot in. To be precise however, I must not forget that Llandrindod Wells is within the bounds of Radnor, and that the gouty and dyspeptic Saxons who nowadays foregather there in considerable numbers have at least discovered the existence of such a county, though a wider acquaintance with it is for obvious reasons rarely perhaps acquired; but of this anon.

Since Ludlow, Hereford and other border towns of intimate historic association with South Wales must be passed over in these pages, it would be irrelevant to give any space to Kington, as there is no longer any doubt about its nationality. It may be briefly dismissed then as possessing a railway station, kept decently in the background, a bridge over the Arrow, a few old timbered houses, and a single narrow street, where a carriage or two may be seen upon most days, as evidence of a tolerable neighbourhood, to say nothing of the current of Hereford cattle and Shropshire and Radnor

sheep that at certain periods ebb and flow through it in a steady stream. As we pass out of the town up the hill towards Wales there are many snug residences embowered in ancient trees, and on the summit a beautiful and stately church, whose wide-spreading graveyard would alone furnish a whole chapter of border history. Hergest Court, too, which is visible from this corner, is noted for something more than old walls and



Hergest Ridge.

old oak and for great social importance in past ages. Even in days when murder was an every day matter a daughter of this house, named Ellen, earned in her lifetime the sobriquet of "Gethin," or "The Terrible," by a savage deed which has survived the centuries. For her brother having been treacherously slain by a cousin, this strenuous damsel did not sit down and weep like the mediæval maiden of tradition, but took upon herself the fraternal obligations of the period, and not only

killed with her own hand her brother's murderer, but aggravated the tragedy by killing him in church on a Sunday.

Under the shadow of the churchyard trees our road is split in half by the nearer point of the great ridge of Hergest, which goes swelling onward and upward towards the Welsh frontier. Both ways lead to Wales. The left hand, following the valley of the Arrow past Hergest Court, brings us in less than five miles to the hamlet of Huntington, and an elevation of nearly a thousand feet above the sea. Here a church, a small manor house, and the fragments of a border castle look down from the edge of Radnor and the roof of the world over the whole county of Hereford, and thither habit and association would set my face. But I must take my reader by the other and the better road; for, this book not being a survey of the county of Radnor, but a pilgrimage through a considerable portion of South Wales, there is no space for the delectable byways of the little border county, well worthy though they be of the attention of those who will brave stony and perpendicular lanes for delightful scenery and ocular demonstration that the world is not all moving at such a giddy rate as folks who dwell in its centres are sometimes prone to think.

But the whole county of Radnor is a byway to the English public, and there will be nothing hackneyed whatever in taking the admirable coach road which runs nearly through its centre to either Llandrindod Wells or Builth-on-Wye, and noting what may seem of interest on either hand. As we shall be mainly road travellers throughout this journey, I need scarcely perhaps mention that our method of progress is assumed to be the cycle—though this indeed is really a matter of small importance. It would be mere affectation, however, to pretend that the pedestrian of former days, knapsack on back, is any longer a feature of life on the highway. He is as extinct as the dodo or the saddle horse, and perhaps no wonder! Those to whom exercise is injurious or distasteful or of no moment, and who affect the dogcart or the motor-car, have some

advantages in the matter of transport and of weather, but in every other respect the cycle is the ideal vehicle for this kind of enterprise. There appear even yet to be belated beings whose idea of it must be derived from glimpses of the hump-backed brigade on the Portsmouth road of a Sunday. There are even quite well-disposed individuals who still imagine the saddle of a bicycle to be a precarious perch which takes the rider all his time and attention to maintain, and who either cannot or will not realise that the cyclist going easily has more leisure to look about him and is much less jogged about than the driver of a two-wheeled trap, and quite as securely seated.

Horseback under certain conditions is a delightful method of travelling. The modern English horse, however, is not often well adapted to the purpose, being more suitable for short distances and sluggish livers than for all day riding. I have myself done a great deal of this both of choice and necessity in America, but there, your horse was educated not to break its bridle if hitched to a tree or fence. It was also trained, as were English roadsters in former days, to a smooth and running pace suitable for all day work on roads, and it didn't catch a cold if its nightly quarters varied in temperature, and rarely fell lame. But there could be no great advantage in pursuing a macadamised road for many consecutive days in spasmodic bursts of pounding trot varied by a three mile-an-hour walk, and hampered by requirements in the matter of accommodation and attention that certainly distinguish that most exacting of quadrupeds—the well-to-do British steed.

But such things after all are matters of taste and circumstances. These pages are intended for the armchair as well as for the traveller, and it signifies little to the reader how the writer has got over the ground.

The spire of Kington church has scarcely faded from sight when a white stone by the wayside proclaims the bounds of Wales, such as Henry the Eighth ordained them. There are many gates to Wales and this one, through which so few strangers

enter, is by no means the least beautiful. A rather striking avenue of tall ash and poplar trees seems appropriate to the occasion, and behind them, like a giant sentry keeping watch over the pass, the precipice of Stanner rocks springs some hundreds of feet into the air. Now Stanner is a familiar landmark, is of volcanic nature, and a prime favourite of geologists and botanists. Trees and shrubs cling to its rugged sides, and so many rare flowers flourish in its crevices that it is locally known as the Devil's Garden. Upon the other side of the narrow valley, the big bulk of Hergest ridge terminating in Hanter Hill is worthy of Wales in altitude and form and colouring, and through the gap to the westward bright strips of green meadows, musical with babbling streams and twinkling with the stir of alder leaves in the soft June wind, make a bewitching foreground to the blue masses of Gladestry and Colva, of Newchurch and Glascombe which fill the distance. We have left the warm red sandstone of Herefordshire behind us for the slate-stone formations most usual in Radnor and more natural perhaps to a mountainous country. Over our road, which is admirable, a coach from Cheltenham and Hereford to Aberystwith used, to run daily, in the beginning of the last century, and a delightful ride its passengers must have had when the skies were kind. Now we only meet the sturdy Radnor farmers mounted occasionally on cobs or ponies, but more often driving in spring carts on business bent to Kington. The mounted farmer, like the mounted squire, parson or doctor, has practically disappeared from the roads of England, but in many parts of Wales we shall renew acquaintance with this common feature of the highway in days not very remote.

After climbing by an easy gradient over a moderate pass, our path drops down out of the hills, and we find ourselves at the hamlet of Walton, looking out over the Vale of Radnor, beyond whose green and level floor the rolling solitudes of Radnor forest for the whole length of the horizon, from north to south, fill the sky. Many roads meet here: one of them

goes to Presteign, this long time the county capital, though standing on its very edge. Another runs north to Knighton, on the North-Western line; a third strikes westward across the Vale, and it requires some faith to realise that it surmounts the formidable-looking mountain barrier ahead of us, without some desperate struggles. Close at hand, and upon the hither side of the Vale, Old Radnor Church stands nobly perched above the lowlands on its rocky spur. Shorn of its dignities of town and castle in the 12th century by destructive Welsh princes, it looks across the lowland at New Radnor, its successor, whose collapse, though not quite so complete, is almost as ancient history. No one should pass near Old Radnor without a look inside its church. For it is of fine proportions, with a large tower and nave, two side aisles, a chancel, and a somewhat celebrated screen which spans the entire breadth of the building. Its striking situation however, is its particular charm, and this again loses nothing by its apparent remoteness from the world and the unexpected fashion in which it so boldly and suddenly confronts one. The outlook from the well-shaded graveyard across the Vale of Radnor, with the woods of Harpton lying low in the foreground, and the mountain range beyond, is indeed one to linger over. Maes-y-fed (the absorbing meadow) is the old Welsh name for Radnor, so called from the fact of the Summergil brook which waters the valley sinking into the porous soil during dry weather. Old Radnor, or Maes-y-fed Hên, now but a cluster of cottages, if some old authorities are to be believed, resounded in Roman times with the martial stir of a legionary camp. Charles the First at any rate was here after his flight from Naseby, and supped at the farmhouse down in the vale yonder, half a mile away. But Radnorshire cuts almost the poorest figure of all the Welsh counties in history. It had no separate existence, no special characteristics as a district, like most of the others, before it became a county. As I have remarked, it was the lower corner of Powys in pre-Norman

times, and when those greedy landgrabbers poured over Offa's dyke it became in great part the spoil of Bernard de Newmarch, who is for ever identified with the conquest of its much more valuable neighbour, Brycheiniog—afterwards Breconshire—of which there will be more to say later. The great border family of de Braoses or Bruces had become the lords of much of Radnor in the 12th century, and they, in their turn, after being more than once expelled by the Welsh princes, gave way to the still more illustrious Mortimers, who, strengthened by a Royal Welsh alliance, and themselves close to the throne of England itself, held sway for generations over a moiety of Radnor and a considerable slice of Hereford. Another scrap of interest too belongs to the somewhat scanty records of this thinly peopled county, for in the days of Harold, who came nearer to a conquest of Wales than any other Saxon king or chief, a small lodgment of Saxon peasants seems to have been made near Old Radnor—the only instance of the kind in pre-Norman times that either Welsh legend or Welsh history, so far as I am aware, tells of.

But the most notable incident with which Radnorshire can claim connection is beyond a doubt that bloody fight between Glyndwr and Mortimer on the hill of Pilleth, which Shakespeare has immortalised. If we were to follow the road already alluded to as running south to Knighton, past Evan Job of the Mynors', an ancient border family, and past Newcastle, where Whittakers have lived for a respectable period, we should in less than half a dozen miles drop down into the valley of that famous trout and grayling stream the Lugg. Just above the village of Whitton where the road crosses the stream, you may descry, but a mile or two distant, thrusting its high shoulder against the horizon, the hill of Pilleth or Brynglas. It was here, or rather at its foot, in the narrow valley of the Lugg, that Glyndwr's Welshmen, under his redoubtable Lieutenant Rhys Gethin, or Rhys the Terrible, in the year 1401, met Edmund Mortimer with his tenantry from East Radnor and Hereford, and many

doughty knights and warriors besides. It was the old story of nimble, light-armed troops meeting heavier footed and heavier armed soldiers in a cramped position. The English army was cut to pieces. Eleven hundred men, including many knights and nobles, were left dead upon the field. Mortimer himself, who was uncle and lawful guardian to the actual proprietor, whom Richard II. had designated his heir, but whom Henry IV. naturally for that very reason kept under lock and key, was taken prisoner, to ally himself eventually with Glyndwr and marry his daughter and die in his service. It was the first staggering blow that Owen dealt his old master Bolingbroke, for he had once been his esquire. Shakespeare's fine description of the receipt of the news of Pilleth by the King, who "shaken and wan with care," but hoping that his broils with domestic foes in various parts of Britain were at last over, was resting at his Berkhampstead palace, indulging in day dreams of that Crusade to Palestine which was the darling wish of his heart. The soil of Britain was to be no longer daubed with her own children's blood. Her fields to be no more "channelled with trenching war," nor her flowerets trampled by the "armed hoofs of hostile paces,"

> "when all athwart there came
> A post from Wales laden with heavy news,"

whose worst was that the noble Mortimer,

> "Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
> Against the irregular and wild Glendower,
> Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,
> A thousand of his people butchered."

Pilleth is a somewhat lonely place, unless indeed the stormy day on which I paid the field a visit left too sombre an impression of it. A casual visitor would find no local enthusiasm for the historic spot, and indeed a very limited recognition of it. He would probably be told that the whole valley of the Lugg hereabouts was strewn with the relics of ancient conflicts and

the mounds of warriors, which is true enough, though these abundant traces are mainly prehistoric, mysterious, and mute of voice for us moderns. But the hill of Pilleth is quite another matter, and has much distinction and suggestiveness as a battle-field, for near the centre of its grassy slopes is a solitary plantation about which hangs a tale. The hill it seems had been immemorial sheep pasture till some thirty years ago, when the tenant, prompted no doubt by the high price of grain, could no longer keep his ploughshares out of it. In the pursuance of this enterprise, and at a certain spot on the face of the slope, the ploughman ran into such a mass of human bones as to leave no room for doubt that the victims of some great slaughter had been hastily interred there. And having regard to facts and dates there could be little question but that these were the remains of Mortimer's eleven hundred ill-fated men. The spot was withdrawn from cultivation and planted with young trees, which now form an ample and conspicuous grove visible from far and near, an eloquent memorial of the bloody disaster which in the fifteenth century so shook the Court of England. With regard to the men of Radnor and Hereford, who both owed allegiance to the Mortimers and followed him against Glyndwr, it is sometimes said that the racial instincts of the true Welshmen were too much for them, and that their desertion to Glyndwr's side when the battle opened contributed much to the undoing of their feudal lord. I have told elsewhere how this ill-fated noble purchased his freedom by marrying the Welsh chieftain's daughter and becoming "his man," and how proclamations went out in Mortimer's name commanding the commons and gentry of Radnor and Presteign to espouse the cause of the great Welsh rebel and the proper heir of the dead Richard, to wit their own lord the young Earl of March, then in Henry's keeping.

From Old to New Radnor is just three miles, by a straight and level road leading right across the valley to the foot of the opposing range, Harpton, the home of the late Sir George

Cornewall Lewis, lies upon the left, Downton upon the right, while immediately ahead the Eastern wall of Radnor forest looms larger and higher till we run right into what is left of the old capital of the county, which slumbers under its very shadow. New Radnor nowadays is scarcely more than a village, but

Cottage at New Radnor.

there is a good deal both of an actual and mysterious nature in its early story to remove it from the commonplace. Let us climb the lofty mound behind it, where the grass-clad foundations and nothing more are now visible of the once great and powerful castle which the Bruces and the Mortimers in their turn, and many other notable warriors, quite out of theirs,

but in the ups and downs of war, held and garrisoned. I know of few more delightful outlooks within five minutes' walk of a railway than this lofty castle mound, for I forgot to mention that a little narrow-gauge line has followed us from Kington to its terminus here. Nor could there be a more suitable and more ideal vantage point for saying the few words that I feel must be said on old South Wales before going deeper into the country.

We speak to-day of the Principality of Wales, and we often read and sometimes speak of the Marches. I wonder how many of us who do so realise that the Principality in its proper sense only means that part of Wales which the native princes owned at the moment preceding the Edwardian conquest, or, to speak broadly, Carnarvon, Anglesey, Merioneth, with Cardigan and part of Carmarthen, the districts that were surrendered to Edward I. and handed over to the literal jurisdiction of the eldest sons of the Kings of England. How many, too, remember that the Marches of Wales did not mean the borders of that country, but the whole territory which, between the Norman Conquest of England and Edward's final subjection of the remnant of Wales, was eaten up and appropriated by Norman Barons? The Norman Conquest of Wales is a separate business altogether from the conquest of England, with which we are more or less familiar. The consummation of this last is reckoned to have taken some seven years. The conquest of Wales took two hundred. It did not seriously begin till the reign of the Conqueror's son, William Rufus, and was conducted on somewhat different and amateurish lines. Norman barons, whose lust of land had not been fully satisfied by the partition of England, got a license from the king to conquer and to hold so much Welsh territory as they were able to. With the promise of land to all who should follow them, these filibustering warriors had no trouble in raising sufficient forces for their object. How Fitzhamon and his twelve knights conquered Glamorgan, the

most fertile province in Wales, is a classical event in Welsh story. How Bernard de Newmarch, a natural son of William the Conqueror, laid rough hands on Brycheiniog or Brecon and secured it for his descendants is a familiar sequel to the other. Monmouth and parts of Pembroke were treated in like fashion, as were large slices of the north. Powys or the middle Kingdom of Wales, the present Montgomery, was treated partly in the same fashion, but the readier submission of the Princes of Powys to the English kings constituted them in a sense Lord Marchers themselves, holding their hereditary lands under practically the same conditions, before the other native princes had submitted. All this however took some time. The warlike princes of Wales resisted desperately, and again and again the conquerors were driven from the castles that secured their occupation, though always to return, backed by the power of England, to plant themselves more firmly than before. Nor was it wholly by their own swords that the Anglo-Normans won their footing in Wales. The natives had an unequalled genius for quarrelling among themselves. It was natural enough that the Normans' help should be both proffered and accepted by one or other of the contending parties, and that the reward should take the shape of land or the hand of an heiress. Indeed intermarriages became tolerably common between the two aristocracies; sometimes even a Welshman reverted to his old territory by this means, and became a Lord Marcher holding from the King.

South and Mid Wales by the time of Edward I. when all scope for further enterprise of the kind ceased, had become a network of independent palatinates, over which the Lord Marchers ruled absolutely as petty monarchs. They had their chamberlains, judges and courts, in which the laws of England and Wales were administered without any higher appeal than the lord, who exercised the powers of life and death. One must generalise a little, as the question is too complex to admit of detailed treatment. But the Lord Marcher was a greater

man than his brother baron across the border. He held no charter from the King; and was in a sense above it. He had won his little kingdom by his own enterprise and exertions, and he had no intention to define its boundaries on parchment, preferring them to be vague, for they were then elastic. He attended the King's Parliament, and enjoyed the honour of supporting the canopy at a coronation with silver spears. So great was the strength and independence of these nobles, that the Welsh Marches in the Middle Ages were often the main centre of British power, and the region to which the Kings of England turned most anxious eyes. The Clares and the Mortimers, and the great barons who held the fortresses of far-off Pembroke, with their own martial followers and their potential Welsh allies, were more ready and more able for mischief than the feudal chieftains of Kent or Norfolk. This kind of government was all very well in the days of Henry III, but it was a monstrous anomaly in the time of Henry VIII. Every lordship had its own laws, and its ruler did what was right in his own eyes. He cherished his neighbour's felons and outlaws, and was in constant feud with one or other rival potentate, and the misery and chaos were so great that a monster petition, which by the way is well worth reading, went up to the throne in 1535 praying Henry VIII. that the Welsh Marches might be incorporated with England and the Principality. The burly monarch is a much abused person; few know or care to remember that he reconstituted the greater and the better half of Wales, and brought order out of chaos, created six new counties, called Welshmen to Parliament, instituted efficient courts of justice, and welded the whole country together in complete and lasting fashion. As a final word on the subject it may be said that these numerous centres of Norman power introduced as a matter of fact but little alien blood into the ordinary ranks of the Welsh people. A few hangers on and men-at-arms from across the border formed the nucleus of the force which protected his

(the Marcher's) castle, but the native Welsh, though subject to his power, occupied the land (the gentry and the peasants, to use modern terms), and numbers no doubt in time grew attached for various reasons to his service. Many lordships, too, by death or confiscation fell to the Crown, and in such case constables were placed in charge who administered the affairs of the little state as representatives of the King.

Here, on this great Tump of Radnor, was an ideal spot for a Marcher castle, and all around us, though the last stone work has vanished within man's memory, the tangled grass and nettles riot over the filled up cavities of dungeon, vault and cellar. Though Mortimer's property in the days of Glyndwr, the king's people had by some means secured it, and the Welsh leader, swooping down from the Upper Wye, burnt the town and stormed the castle, hanging sixty of the garrison from its walls. Not long ago, while moving earth for the church restoration, the remains of these unhappy victims were discovered, as is supposed, in the castle ditch. But what a glorious perch is this for lighter reflection upon a summer morning, and what a glorious outlook! the silent steeps of the hills crowned with heather and draped in fern springing far into the sky at our back; the lofty tree tops swaying gently on a level with our feet; the peaceful village with its strange story in the flat below; the narrow valley leading westward into the defiles of the forest whither we can trace our future road by the faint dust clouds raised by horse or gig or travelling band of sheep, while away to the eastward is the green vale of Radnor we have just traversed and the sea of hills beyond through which we started.

New Radnor beyond a doubt was once a considerable place, as places then went. Its protecting walls and ditches are still obvious enough and particularly so from this commanding height—and show in remarkable fashion how the place has shrunk since Welsh and English made it one of their favourite cockpits in the days of old. There are wonderful local beliefs

too concerning the bygone grandeur and the vast dimensions of New Radnor, presumably after it had succeeded to the former distinction of its neighbour that now looks so reproachfully at us from across the vale, though Heaven knows it has had its revenge. I was once lying on this same castle hill on a bright and breathless autumn day, endeavouring to gather from the wide-stretching landscape beneath, with its suggestive topography, some kind of mental picture of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as those troublous periods were known here, when a venerable native, with communicativeness written all over his face, broke upon my solitude. He told me how

From the Castle Hill, New Radnor.

they had been anxious to erect the fine column which now keeps green the memory of Sir G. Cornewall Lewis in the village street below, on the top of this castle height, but the ground was too treacherous owing to the old vaults and cellars of the vanished fortress. He then reverted to ancient history and explained to me how the town once reached to "Beggar's Bush," which is some three miles away on the Kington and Knighton road, a story quite on a par with the legend of the drowned cantref of Gwaelod, on the Merioneth coast, with its thirty submerged cities, and yet the old gentleman was quite serious! We then talked of Owen Glyndwr, a subject on which

every New Radnor man can be eloquent, as his destruction of the town and capture of the castle was almost the last event calculated to mark the flight of time in this out of the way corner of the world. He described to me how Glyndwr planted his artillery on the bank ("bank" on the Welsh border means any and every eminence up to about 2,000 feet) by Old Radnor church three miles as the crow flies, and from that convenient and handy spot battered down the castle at his leisure before assaulting it. The artillery legend had its source no doubt in the Civil War when New Radnor was held for the King, and the enemies' guns were planted not in the very harmless seclusion of Old Radnor but in a field conspicuous from here, and a few hundred yards from the village, still known as the *War Field*. I could not however have been otherwise than thankful to meet this delightful and sincere old person—a potential antiquary beyond any doubt, but wandering in a wilderness of ignorance. I told him in the strictest confidence that I was then actually engaged in writing the story of this same Glyndwr, and I am happy to think that the old fellow, who displayed no little interest, felt some satisfaction in having pointed out the precise position of the Welsh hero's siege train.

It was then autumn, and the ferns made golden splashes on the green slopes of the forest. It is now midsummer, and as we pass out of the little town and follow up the valley of the Sommergill into the hollow of the hills, the bracken is just taking on the sheeny richness and luxuriance that follow so quickly upon the longest day. The breath of the moorland fills our lungs as the road by a gentle grade that any one can manage mounts the glen to the romantic hamlet of Llanfihangel-nant-melin, and it is a strange reflection that in all probability no shepherd on the hills nor any ploughman in the valley could tell you that it meant "the Church of the Angels in the mill hollow," so completely has the native tongue died out. A trifling climb hence and the watershed is surmounted,

and close on the watershed, where the road forks, stands that well known but solitary hostel, the Forest Inn. Here the discerning traveller will do well to take his ease for a time and refresh himself, for there are few pleasanter spots in Wales where a chair and a table can be set than in the shade before its modest door. It is a place beloved by Radnorshire holiday makers, gentle and simple, as well it may be, and the hostess may be fairly regarded as upon intimate terms with every one in the county. That this aërial and delightful spot does not seriously suffer from such measure of popularity will be gathered by those who may remember the population of Radnor as quoted on a former page, though it is true one must not forget that Llandrindod water-drinkers can reach here between hours. But to-day they are neither local nor Llandrindod pleasurers, and the silence of the everlasting hills which rise upon all sides is impressive and complete. The wildness of Radnor Forest is somewhat modified by the fact of its length being so much greater than its breadth. If you want to get through it as we are doing you may do so quickly, but if you undertook to follow its higher ridges from the North-Western Railway at Dolau till they drop into the lowlands near Glasbury-on-Wye, as the writer once did, you would find the longest day none too long for the performance, but the recollection of it an abiding one. Black Mixon (2,200 feet), the king of the forest, is out of sight to the north, but the nearer slopes of Whimble, second only to the other in altitude, rise from the valley at our feet and send down their contribution of peaty waters to the infant Sommergill which sings beneath us.

But just over the brow of the hill yonder, a mile or so away, is quite a celebrated cataract, known both in the oldest maps and throughout Radnorshire by the eccentric name of "Water-break-its-neck." Plunging down a narrow over-arching gorge for 75 feet, in wet weather it is well worth while to make the moderate exertion necessary to see it. In a dry season, however, it can hardly be said to do more than afford a good excuse

to the gallants of a picnic party to assist the maidens of their choice over the mild difficulties of a moorland stroll. As I have said, we are at the parting of the ways, the right hand leading to Llandrindod in ten miles, the left to Builth-on-Wye in eight. The first is our line to-day, but before starting on it I would take the reader a few hundred yards up the other, to a spot just over the actual watershed, where the little lake of Llynhilyn abuts upon the road. It is not however the pool itself or the wide stretch of grouse moor in whose lap it lies that would divert me here from our proper route, but the gorgeous panorama that without warning bursts suddenly upon the sight as one turns the corner. The whole Welsh or western side of Radnorshire and a great deal more besides lies spread beneath us, a beautiful confusion of outstanding hills, with their slopes of tender cloud-flecked verdure and their summits wrought into fantastic shapes by the Silurian rocks which give such character to this Mid-Wales landscape; of quiet hamlets and church towers and hanging woodlands; of bosky hollows down which the streams and tributaries of Edw-Ithon or Clywedog are hastening to the Wye, whose tortuous course can be so plainly marked breaking through the centre of the scene. The Black Mountains of Brecon are far to the south of our canvas. But away into Northern Breconshire, leaping the deep trough of the Wye valley but eight miles off, the eye ranges over the long bold ridges of the Epynt Highlands, pierces the whole length of the Irfon Valley to the shadowy cone-shaped pinnacles that overlook Cynghordy and the Vale of Towy, and finally loses itself to the North West in the stormy chaos of hill and mountain where Brecon and Carmarthen, Radnor, Cardigan and Montgomery each contribute their wildest territory towards the making of the greatest solitude in all Wales.

But we are now concerned alone with Radnor, and must turn aside from this Builth road, and perhaps reluctantly, for it is not only a beautiful run from here to the Wyeside town, but

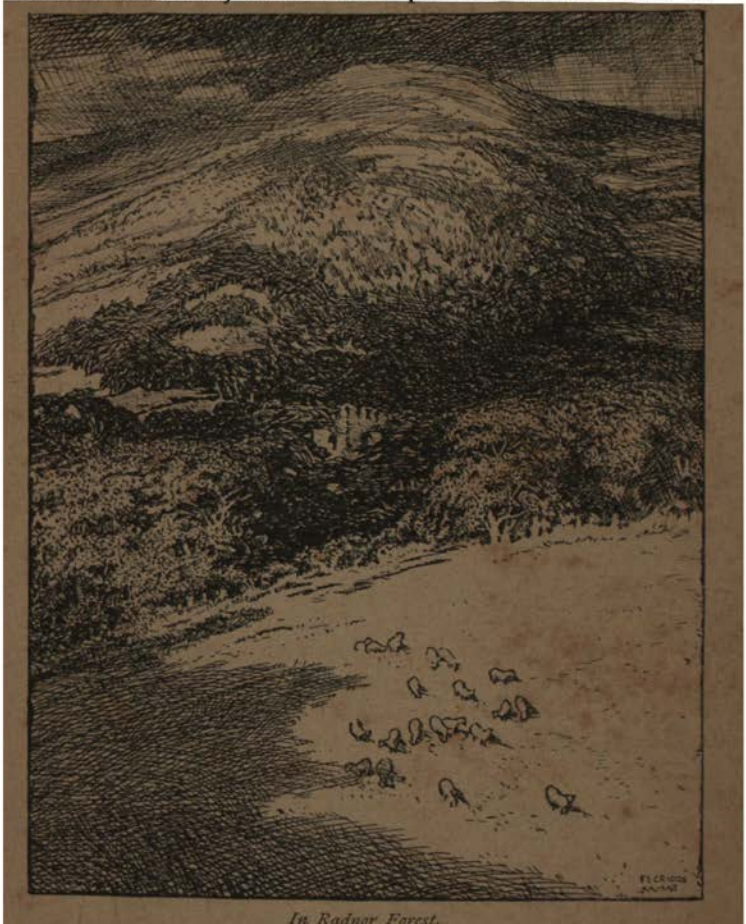
a fine road, and one so gradually, yet consistently, on the downward course that the cyclist may enjoy to the full the charms both of foreground and distance without much reference to the pedals, or yet any difficulty in maintaining a quiet pace. It behoves us here, however, to pursue the right-hand road which leads to Rhayader and Llandrindod. Here too we shall get rewarded for the long climb to New Radnor by an easy time and a good road which for some miles skirts the western slopes of the forest, and gives every opportunity for watching the cloud shadows rolling over these great green uplands. Away on the remote summits and slopes, heather is plentiful, and grouse are thick enough in places to give an occasional bag of forty brace, which for South Wales is something much above the common average. But from here for the most part we can only see the crisp turf, which has made Radnorshire among sheep-breeders, if not among tourists, a familiar name. It can boast at any rate of the finest mountain pastures in Wales, and of a breed of its own which though bigger than the ordinary Welsh mountain sheep, or the Cumberland Herdwick, is almost as sweet of flesh. "Radnors" are in fact the outcome of the first named crossed with Shropshires, and in place of the black of the original "Shrop" on face and legs the orthodox Radnor should be of a tan colour. Needless to say they are smaller and hardier than the true Salopian. The Radnor is not expected to scale precipices in the goat-like fashion of his smaller mountain relative, but is called upon to make his living, when required, in tolerable propinquity to the clouds, and is treated with little more indulgence in winter than his more savage half-brother of the Cardigan or Carnarvon wilds.

Ragged-looking ponies too may be seen shambling along the slopes of the hills in single file, or grouped against the sky in an attitude of defiance towards the pack of yelping collies who are gathering the sheep below with much noise and industry. Here again is a young farmer making efforts to drive a bunch of colts from the open mountain down into a homestead

beside our road. It is quite a stirring sight, suggestive rather of the antipodes or the Far West, than of British pastoral life, to see this ready horseman going at a breakneck gallop along the rough slope of the mountain, his well trained dogs spread out on his flank ready to head off the mob of ponies flying before him, at the first sign of their swerving. In the still summer air you can hear the clang of the horseman's stirrup irons, though a long half mile off, keeping time to the thunder of the many flying hoofs on the dry hillside. More than once the half wild ponies, having been pushed successfully down to within a stone's throw of the gate, make a break for liberty, and carry the chase once more to the far away sky line, the dogs barking as they race back again and their master waking the echoes with his lusty cries of encouragement. An affrighted grouse or two may be seen scudding before the uproar. Wood-pigeons forsake in noisy haste the larch plantations that fringe the mountain foot and swoop through the sky in search of fresh seclusion, or a falcon sails up from the inner sanctuary of the forest and hangs a quivering speck in the blue vault above, wondering what hubbub is this that thus sets the lower world agog.

But all too soon we are running down into Llandegley with its wide commons of pleasant sward, its less pleasant sulphur spring, and strange outstanding bluffs of quartz-holding rock, that is held in high regard by geologists and a noted landmark for miles around. We are now again in the low country, if anything in Rádnorshire can reasonably be so described. Old writers, like Malkin of a century ago, all speak of poor Radnorshire with something like compassion for its backwardness in agriculture and the simplicity of its scanty population. To the discerning traveller of later days, oppressed perhaps with an overdose of the latter and with an eye tired by regular well drained fields and stiff rows of thrifty elms that so pleased the ancients, just emerging from rural untidiness, will think otherwise. For myself I always think of Radnor, even putting its

grander features aside, as a delightful Arcady. It pleases me sometimes to fancy the less bleak parts of it come nearer in



In Radnor Forest.

appearance to the Britain of former days ; of the Tudor, say, or the Stuart period, though this is not to imply that the roads

are bad or that the farming is any longer backward. But there is a delightful absence of formality in its landscape, the wild and the luxuriant, the trim and the rough, are so happily blended, while the crust of the earth waves and tumbles about in a fashion so wholly unconventional and full of surprises. The well tilled farm breaks away so readily into the breezy common all ablaze with gorse and heather and trilling with the skylarks' melody. The well drained ox pastures tail off into thickets of birch and mountain ash, or stretches of undulating boulder-strewn turf through which crystal rills plash unseen amid beds of bracken. Or there again some velvety sweep of turf, nibbled by countless generations of mountain sheep, will of a sudden leap up in a lofty rampart of shining limestone to descend again on to the mossgrown roof trees and pink washed walls of some old stone homestead that might have been gutted by Glyndwr. But we must not linger now in the dingles of the Edw or the Matchway, or the Dulas, or pierce the pastoral seclusions of Colva and Glascomb or Llansaintfraed and Bettws, where stony steep and grass-grown lanes, bosky with tangled hedges and freely watered by the fountains of the overshadowing hills, preserve the sparse inhabitants from that too free contact with the madding crowd which is the cause of so much feverish unrest in neighbouring England. The "little people," too, the Tylwyth teg, must, I think, have been—nay, perhaps are yet—thick in Radnorshire. Folklorists and antiquaries tell us that the land of "once upon a time," the "land of phantasy" for the romancists of North Wales and the borders, was Pembrokeshire. For myself I would choose little Radnor, the Cinderella among Welsh counties, as the scene for any such imaginings. The people of Radnor are not held in great honour by the more pronounced Welshmen to the north and west of them. That the whole county lost its language more than a hundred years ago is of course a grievous lapse in the eyes of the true Cymro. He regards the Radnor Welshman as a renegade, neither good English nor good Welsh.

And he is apt to indulge in mild depreciation of his neighbour, and hold him up as a not over sharp individual of broad and drawling speech and disinclined to over exertion. As a matter of fact the Radnor vernacular is just about the best rustic English in Britain. It does not rank with the speech of the Welsh peasantry, who have learnt English as a foreign language, and speak it with a strong Welsh accent, but, with a few reservations, correctly and grammatically, for that is of course outside comparison. The Radnor man uses English as his mother tongue, with the slightly broad accent of the border Englishman, sharing with the latter a distinct Welsh intonation. But it is far better and more lucid English than the dialects say of either Wiltshire, Somerset, or Devon, even apart from the absence of *h* dropping. The Radnor man, however, has a few delightful eccentricities of conversation, and by this I do not mean precious archaisms of Welsh origin, such as "oonty toomp" for a mole hill, which is worthy of preservation, but flowers of speech rather. There is certainly an indecision and incompleteness about his conversation that is distinctly humorous. If you knock at the door of Ty-glyn farm and ask whether Mr. Jones lives there, and that worthy himself answers your summons, he will seem to dissemble in the most unnecessary fashion, and commit himself no further than to say that he "expects so." If pressed on the point, he will imply in some roundabout way that you are not far wrong in your surmise, and if you then asked him point blank whether his name was Jones, he would probably not say more than that it was "sure to be." There is another universal colloquialism common to the Radnor and Hereford border that at times assumes an undeniably comic form, and that is the qualification of most statements with the termination "or something." When a man tells you that his young chickens have been killed by a rat or something, the affix is unremarkable, but when he says he is going to the fair next day to buy a horse "or something" you would rather infer that he was a person in whose pocket

money burnt a hole. When it reaches the point, however, of making a man appear not to know what he is himself, it gets really interesting. A friend of mine, on taking a place in an out of the way part of this border region, found himself the chief man in the parish, and by consequence the nominal leader

The Ithon at Pen-y-bont.

in church affairs. Within a week of his arrival he was informed a farmer wished to see him, who, on being shown in, excused the liberty he had taken on the plea of being "churchwarden or somethin'." It afterwards transpired that so far from there being any vagueness about this useful person's office, he had

held it almost ever since he could remember, and practically ran the church.

In the meantime, we have passed through Pen-y-bont, that pleasant village on the banks of the Ithon, which here sparkles cheerily between its ruddy banks. Four miles more of uneventful travelling brings us to that now imposing accumulation of streets and squares which covers what we remember, not a great while ago, as the homely and inconsiderable watering-place of Llandrindod Wells. Perched on a breezy plateau, around whose base the Ithon churns its noisy way through woodland glades towards the Wye, Llandrindod is almost as proud of, and perhaps owes as much to, its salubrious air as to its mineral springs. It stands some 800 feet above sea level, is surrounded by heathy commons, backed by pleasant hills of crisp sward and bracken, and looks out towards the mountains of the north and west over a fine sweep of undulating country.

I am not going to criticise the architecture of the red brick villas that have sprung up by the score on these heathlands within recent memory, nor wax sentimental because I can remember the gorse blooming where many rows of them now stand. They are not a bit uglier than is to be expected, and many of them look extremely comfortable. While if a few acres of common are thus desecrated, there are thousands more yet intact, and the whole of Radnorshire very much at your disposal if though a patient you are reasonably active. The London and North-Western Railway too, passes through the place, excellent roads run in many directions, and there are several delightful walks among the hills to the southward. Llandrindod, even before it boomed, some ten years ago, was no dream in brick or stone, in all conscience. There was no nucleus of any old village or town to spoil. The later buildings are quite as sightly as those which arose in the earlier or middle periods of the nineteenth century. But the old *habitué* does not think so. "Utterly spoiled, sir, utterly spoiled!"

is his unfailing verdict. "Dress for dinner and all that blanked nonsense!" The fact is Llandrindod till lately was an almost purely Welsh institution. All classes went there more or less, and were mostly acquaintances in their various degrees. Now London and England have found it out, and it is comparatively cosmopolitan, and of course far more luxurious. The place has a chequered and not uninteresting story. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century its saline and sulphur spring began to attract visitors, who put up with such rough accommodation as they could find in the scant farmhouses around. But in 1749 an enterprising Salopian, one Grosvenor, of sporting habit, took a lease of the site, built considerably and provided accommodation for several hundred guests. People of a prosperous if not fashionable description flocked there. They shot, rode races, made love, and above all played cards with such ardour that the place attracted professional gamblers and other undesirables in such numbers that when the lease ran out the proprietor levelled it with the ground, leaving nothing but the traces of fishponds to mark the site. Put the serious water-drinker was not to be thus lightly baffled, and continued to seek the rough local accommodation till the Old Pumphouse, the predecessor of the present one, was erected early in the last century. Here around it Llandrindod life flourished in a quiet way, growing within modest limits till the railroad came in the 'sixties, then spurting forward again into a further relapse till the late boom made quite a large and important place of it, and made, I believe, at the same time the fortunes of many people. Hitherto English folks had come here very little. Social life had been extremely Welsh and somewhat primitive. Almost the only aristocratic element had been a few Welsh squires of gouty tendencies, who pooh-pooh'd and pshawed the Continental cures their London doctors ordered them, and carried their families to Llandrindod, where no doubt the port wine worked out of their systems quite as well. Here, too, they could feed, as they would certainly have put it, like Christians

and at Christian hours, could run home to see their hay carried, or to attend a meeting, or, as they quaffed saline or sulphur, could talk crops, stock, or poor rates with kindred souls, gentle or simple, from every part of Wales. Indeed, most middle-aged people, that one knows or meets in Wales, have at some period of their youth danced attendance on an elderly relative at Llandrindod Wells, or mildly frolicked there themselves. There were select lodging-houses for the more exclusive folk, while the plainer people, preachers, farmers, tradesmen, who formed the great bulk of the visitors, crowded the ordinary buildings, paying for their bedrooms only, a sum which covered the use of a common dining-room and the cooking of the provisions they almost always bought themselves.

Chief of the hotels in bygone Llandrindod was of course the old Pumphouse, which was really in its way quite a classic spot, and a curious mixture of simplicity, comfort and social discrimination. There were two tariffs and two sets of visitors, commonly known as the House of Lords and the House of Commons. There was a huge kitchen too, where the guests smoked their pipes and mixed their punch under oak rafters decorated with festoons of lordly hams. Quite a landmark in the life of many of the elder generation of Welshmen was this old Pumphouse at Llandrindod, with its queer homely customs and endearing memories—and for many of them the Llandrindod of to-day appears but a chilly waste of brick and uncongenial formality. A great hotel now stands on this old site, always, however, an exclusive and isolated one, standing well away from its fellows at the foot of the wooded hills. It is sometimes full to bursting even in June with guests from every part of the island; the band plays in the grounds every afternoon, and the smack of the golf ball and frantic shouts of "fore" resound over the common. The lake beneath the hill, it is true, is an old contrivance, but the ancient little church on the green heights above is the only really venerable institution that I can think of in the whole place.

But Llandrindod is very proud of its present success and prosperity. The London doctors seem always to have had a good word for its waters. But some impetus perhaps was needed to make them realise that, waters being equal, Welsh mountain breezes, Welsh mutton and a comfortable run on the North-Western were perhaps better accompaniments to the rest of the treatment than stuffy German pine woods with a thermometer at 90° in the shade, a tiresome and expensive journey, and victuals and hours that perhaps irritate the prejudiced palate and stomach of the true Briton. The London physician has now taken up Llandrindod quite violently, and the Welsh preachers, who used to crowd there in former days and be quite personages in their way, find the times, I should imagine, sadly out of joint. When I first knew the place the burly figure of a celebrated pulpit orator of the Methodist persuasion was a familiar one upon the walks and around the Wells of the lower park. Everybody in Wales knew, or knew of, "Kilsby" Jones, and if he was anywhere within half-a-mile you were not likely to remain in ignorance of the fact. He was a person possessed of much force of character and some literary gifts. His pulpit eloquence, however, was perhaps remarkable for flights of eccentricity rather than of genius. His chapel at Llandrindod was always crowded by people of all denominations, many of whom were suspected of going there to hear something racy, and not for their moral or intellectual improvement. The stories told of his pulpit sayings would fill a book. He was particularly great on the question of offertories, and could preach for half-an-hour on the unspeakable iniquity of the threepenny bit. An acquaintance of mine was sitting under this celebrated evangelist on one occasion when he finished his sermon with a more outspoken appeal than usual to the congregation to open their pockets, and full of caustic satire against those who buttoned them up or gave small change. Two strange youths, somewhat smartly dressed, had come in late and been shown up to the only vacant seats, which happened to be immediately under the

pulpit. When Kilsby had quite finished urging his congregation to their utmost financial exertions in his usual colloquial fashion, and was wiping his face after his labours, he cast his eyes on the gorgeous youths below him, and added in a matter of fact, dry business-like tone, "And I have no doubt that the two gentlemen in frock coats and yellow gloves who came in late are good for at least half-a-crown apiece." I believe Miss Braddon laid the scene of one of her forty or fifty novels at Llandrindod, and those responsible for what may be described as the literary traditions of the Spa have crammed this down the visitor's throat ever since, and the faint connection seems a trifle out of perspective. With all the merits of that prolific writer, her productions are hardly of the sort to throw a lasting glamour over landscape or stimulate the topographical sentiment. I do not suppose a popular writer ever lived more incapable of painting the rural life of any class with reasonable accuracy of detail. I do not know whether in *Hostages to Fortune* Senior Wranglers shine at Lord's, or whether gilded, hard riding and many horsed foxhunters select South Devon as the scene of their operations, but I note from extracts in the guide-book that the methods are characteristic. Llandrindod, for instance, is called Llandrysak, and Abbey Cwmhir becomes Lochwithian, arrangements of letters that would be quite impossible in Wales alone perhaps of all his Majesty's home dominions.

I do not think it is necessary to discuss the merits of the Llandrindod waters or to chronicle their several analyses. But the visitor without experience of these resorts will probably learn by observation of the ruder and lustier sort of *habitué* what an enormous amount of liquid the human frame is capable of receiving within a short space of time. I should like however, before leaving this "Buxton of Wales," to record an incident that occurred here nearly eighty years ago apropos of the extraordinary simplicity of the Welsh clergy, even in English-speaking districts, at that time. The narrator was an

immediate forebear of my own, who died at an advanced age some thirty years ago, and I may be pardoned perhaps the personal note, since things related at first hand have a value, or seem to have, that does not belong to less direct evidence. He was staying at the time at the old Pumphouse, and among the guests was a personage of great public note, I think a Cabinet Minister. One Sunday afternoon a party from the hotel, among whom were the celebrity in question and the narrator, walked some miles over the hills and dropped into a country church while the service was proceeding. The congregation was respectable for the place and period, but though everything denoted extreme simplicity and poverty, the visitors were greatly struck by the nature and quality of the parson's discourse. So much so indeed that when they got back it was suggested that a little purse should be made up among themselves and sent over to the eloquent but homely vicar as an offering and tribute of their respect. My relative being himself in orders undertook to be the bearer of the offering which had assumed the proportions and form of a five pound Bank of England note. When he reached the hamlet and inquired for the vicarage it was pointed out to him at some distance along the road, and as he walked towards it he casually noticed a labouring man trimming the hedge and cleaning out the ditch beside the highway. On reaching the vicarage and inquiring for the parson, the woman who opened the door said he was out but that if her interlocutor had come from the village he must have passed him on the road. "Impossible," replied the other, "he had passed no one but a labourer trimming the hedge."

To shorten my story, the peasant in shirt sleeves turned out to be the eloquent vicar of the preceding Sunday, and as he emerged from the wayside ditch, wiping his hands on his corduroys, accosted his visitor with some surprise but without a touch of embarrassment. The latter then proceeded to explain his mission, thanking his brother parson for the

edification he had afforded them by his sermon, and reserving as a sort of *bonne bouche* till the end the name of the well-known statesman who had so opportunely formed one of the congregation. But to the other's astonishment the then familiar name fell evidently upon deaf ears and conveyed no meaning whatever. The visitor then proceeded with due tact to introduce the matter of the offering, and finally handed the bank-note to his unconventional and perspiring brother. It was received however and unfolded with so blank a look that the donor thinking the other's pride had perchance been wounded, hastened to repeat the motives that had prompted the gift, and enlarge on the scope of its possible application. It was soon evident that there was no trouble of this sort. For the vicar, or curate-in-charge, having examined the face of the note with a puzzled air replied, "And of what use indeed is this piece of paper to me?" The amazing truth then dawned upon his companion that the poor man had never seen a bank-note before!

"Do with it!" he said, "why, take it to the bank, of course, and they will give you five pounds for it!"

The revulsion of feeling and delight at so unexpected a windfall on the part of this unsophisticated pastor, the narrator was accustomed to say, was worth walking many times the distance to behold. And as the latter was not given to anecdote, and by temperament incapable of embroidering such as he thought worth preserving, and moreover had a parish himself at the edge of the county, I think the story is worth printing as a veracious instance, not of what was usual but of what was possible in the Welsh hills at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is not perhaps so well worth noting that the said parson explained his avocation during the week of a day labourer as a financial necessity, as one well knows that in the dales of Cumberland and Westmoreland such a combination was common enough at that period.

In taking leave of Llandrindod, which by a fast train is not

much over an hour from Shrewsbury, I may repeat that it is a convenient, and of course with such a wide choice of accommodation a comfortable, centre from which to investigate the beauties of mid-Wales. Among the most interesting sights of the neighbourhood, too, is the scanty ruins of Abbey-Cwm-Hir in a remote valley among the hills some eight miles to the north-east. A charming road meanders thither up the winding vale of the Clwyedog, and lands you in as sequestered a nook as a famous monastery could have wished to nestle in. Needless to say it was a foundation of those energetic sheep-farmers, the Cistercians, and is historically notable as having been destroyed by Glyndwr. The Wye valley, too, of which we are now about to see so much, is but five or six miles from Llandrindod. And those who cannot do as we do—and after all at Llandrindod they must be the majority—people whose peregrinations are confined to the environs of the place itself, may range north and westward, with the eye at least, over a fine stretch of hill and valley, full of suggestiveness to those who know their Wales, and of ever changing charm as the day waxes and wanes and the lights come and go, even to those who do not.

On the Wye.

CHAPTER II

It might seem reasonable since we have penetrated so far into Radnorshire as to be within seven miles of Rhayader-on-Wye—which is to be the Northern limit of our tour—to push on there at once. But as the Wye valley is to occupy us for a chapter or two, and seeing how much more satisfactory it is to ascend than to descend a river, I purpose to flit back again to the border and enter Wales by a more orthodox route. Nor is there anything incongruous in such a proceeding. It will in no way inconvenience my reader in his arm-chair, while I may say at once, that though it seems natural to take him in fancy along a more or less systematic route, and for a hurried

run, the idea may be of some practical use. Still, the sensible tourist who would fain see and understand the beauties of a country, will make his headquarters at certain centres and from thence cover the surrounding district. For myself the method of literary progress in former books would seem to have suggested to a critic here and there that I actually started on my journey and my investigations of the country in person at one end of the red line on the map, and worked through them in the order and at the pace I am enabled to conduct my reader. This would be the record of an impressionist indeed! Perhaps it is not necessary or very relevant to say that many of both the highways and byways in this book have been travelled backwards and forwards again and again at various times—some of them not merely while this little work was in progress but more years than I care to think of before it was even in contemplation. Now the Wye valley, where it opens wide its gates between Hay and Hereford, makes an admirable entry to South Wales from the Southern English Counties. The railroad too, which enters the Principality by this same channel, will deposit the intending explorer of South Wales at any of the border stations which his fancy may select. For ourselves we may as well be precise since there is nothing to encumber our movements, and alight at Witney, and go easily along the mile or two of road on the North bank of the river which leads to that venerable little hostelry of stone and timber known as Rhydspence; a suitable compromise of English and Welsh nomenclature for a house that squats upon the very line dividing the two countries. Witney gets its name from a famous family who, in the middle ages, owned it, and were among the great ones of this portion of the earth. Glyndwr, having killed most of the family at the battle of Pilleth mentioned in the last chapter, proceeded to burn their mansion among others. They sprung, however, from their ashes, and flourished again with much vigour.

And in the meantime there will be plenty of good people,

who, on account of the oblivion that hangs over South Wales, will be thinking that we have left the best part of the Wye far behind us between Ross and Chepstow. Let them take heart. There are fifty miles before us at any rate of this, upon the whole, most beautiful of Welsh rivers, which if higher mountains by far, if waters incomparably clearer and more impetuous, if surroundings at once as soft and infinitely wilder make for superiority, may fairly claim it.

Fifty people have seen Simondsyat and the Wyndcliffe for one that has seen Aberedw and Doldowlod, just as there are fifty pages of fugitive literature annually devoted to the beauties of Surrey for a single line that treats of Breconshire ; but who could pass quickly from the banks of Wye or Usk to those of the Wey or Wandle without a gasp? Not that I would for a moment suggest such a sharp contrast as this between the respective merits of the Upper and Lower Wye, only it would seem more fitting that a river, which has a greater mileage of consistently high class scenery than any other in England or Wales, should be known by its best and not by its second best.

Here too, as in the last chapter when we entered Radnorshire, the Welsh border seems marked by a sudden growth in stature and boldness of the hills and a louder note in the music of the streams. For the Black Mountains on the further or Southern side of the valley begin here to loom up into the imposing shapes and altitudes their name and reputation seem to demand. We on our side are again in Radnorshire, skirting its Southern bound, and indeed a road hereabouts comes plunging down on to our smooth highway, which has struggled painfully from Kington, but eight miles distant, over the rugged semi-civilised ridges of Brilley Mountain. I have breasted that road often and have never failed to doubt the veracity of its milestones, poor undersized things, too, lurking in blackberry bushes as if ashamed to look one in the face, as well they may be.

But there are no such rough encounters for us down here in the

Vale—not yet, at any rate: the travelling is of the best and we may look about us at our ease. It is fitting enough that the first conspicuous object to greet us beyond the border-line should be the ruins of a Marcher Castle, though, to be strictly accurate, the red ivy-covered fragments of Clifford—being on the further banks of the river—are just in Hereford. Beautifully posed upon a wooded knoll at the bend of a long broad reach that glitters in the sunshine between flower-decked fields, these hoary ruins, almost hidden under the load of greenery that festoons them, awake for once some softer memories than those of sword and trumpet. For hence went forth to captivate King Henry that ill-fated and famous maid "fair Rosamund," so called, says Hollinshed, "by the common people for her passing beauty propernesse of person and pleasant wit with other amyable qualities; verily a rare and peerless peece in those days." But the Wye banks do not hold her dust, for all the world knows that she lies at Godstow, near Oxford:

> "Hic jacet in tumbâ Rosa mundi
> Non Rosa mundâ—Non redolet sed
> Olet quae redolere solet."

But the Cliffords were to leave the Wye and the moderate position they held there for a mightier destiny three hundred miles away. For, as I have told elsewhere,[1] a great northern heiress, a Vipont, was placed as ward with Roger Clifford by Henry III., and this enterprising noble, in the natural order of things, passed from his position of guardian to that of husband, and the owner of vast estates in Cumberland. He built the great castle of Brougham on the Eamont's banks, near Penrith, which has braved the centuries much more successfully than Clifford, and founded a family that for nearly three hundred years were a dominant factor in the turbulent life of the Scottish marches.

And all this time our way lies somewhat uneventfully be-

[1] *Highways and Byways in the Lake District.*

tween lush hedges, where the brier rose is already scenting the air, and beneath tall avenues of elm or oak or poplar that show the fatness of the low land in their aspiring tops. And the Wye upon our left hand goes sweeping through the broad valley in wide and sinuous curves, now rushing swiftly over a shingly bed—now resting quietly in long and glassy pools. Lazy-looking Hereford cattle browse on rich pastures or stand knee-deep in the shining shallows of the river, and large flocks of rooks and starlings keep company with fresh shorn Shropshire sheep on the flats. We are in Wales but not yet of it, unless indeed the ascending summits of the Black Mountains may count for something against the atmosphere of Herefordshire which still pervades church and village, cottage and homestead.

Yet one would never guess what a comparatively wild and Welsh country it is whose Southern slopes we are now unconsciously brushing, and what a chaos of hill and valley, dimpled here and there with red patches of tillage, but pasture for the most part. Grass in the hollows chequered with untrimmed fences and watered by wayward streams, and grass on the uplands struggling for dominion with gorse and bracken, heath and rushes. Whitewashed homesteads, small and rugged, bearing the heavy roof trees and brown stone slabs of olden days, stand thinly sprinkled over this secluded Arcady, and humble churches, old in appearance as the hills above them, have given their names since time was to half-a-dozen straggling parishes. Tortuous and narrow lanes, sometimes stony, sometimes grass grown, sometimes torn by unruly streams, clamber about from homestead to homestead and from hamlet to hamlet. Of country seats there are scarcely any, though a wonderful little manor house of fourteenth century date, set in a very haven of secluded beauty at Glascombe, rises reproachfully to my memory even as I write this sentence. On market days at Hay or Kington or Builth not men only, but women, too, in goodly numbers, may be seen emerging from this backwater of rural life on stout cobs or

Welsh ponies as in the days of old. The smart traps that whisk past us down here in the Wye valley are in no great request between Michaelchurch and Cregina, or Colva and Painscastle, as anyone would readily understand who had cause to negotiate its labyrinth of lanes. Even the local cyclist on business or pleasure bent flinches, I fancy, from this otherwise delectable slice of Radnor; this old district of Elvael that lies to the South of the Kington and Builth road over which we travelled as far as the Forest Inn in the last chapter.

I once sat behind a family horse, accustomed to precipitous hills and justly regarded as proof against any reasonable novelty, on an expedition through this country. He didn't like it a bit and literally snorted with indignant protest as the dog-cart bumped and swayed behind him, and wandering branches from trees or hedgerow smote his face, and truant rivulets played about his fetlocks, or unfenced precipices yawned beneath his feet. Even in this one round we must have passed half-a-dozen churches, and it was in this very country oddly enough that Dr. Malkin, one of the earliest of the very few English writers on South Wales, paused to notice, and of course condemn, the old Welsh custom of dancing in churchyards and playing fives against the church wall. The doctor went through here about a hundred years ago and these admirable, though no doubt ill-placed, pastimes must have been even then dying out. It is curious to think of the now Sabbatarian and Calvinistic Wales shocking the sense of the travelling Saxon in these particulars, though it may be remembered that the South Walian, more especially near the border, is less rigid in such matters and is a lighter hearted person generally than his brother beyond the Severn and the Dovey. Dr. Malkin, however, was greatly concerned, though he qualifies his disapproval by admitting that these lads and lasses did not actually dance over the graves of their ancestors but in a portion of the churchyard set apart. Otherwise he has nothing but praise for the Radnor rustic of 1800, declaring both his speech and his manners to be superior

even to what he regarded as the high standard of the West. I know many people who hold the Reverend Doctor's opinion to-day, though perhaps you would not find them in Breconshire!

People in Southern Radnorshire, however, did not always lead such tranquil, uneventful lives. In the days of the Welsh princes and the Lord Marchers there were no byways and no backwaters of life in our sense of the word. There were no roads or railroads or big cities to leave districts in the lurch and cast them into outer darkness, unless indeed the whole of Britain might be regarded as then bereft of light, which is another matter. Indeed, the English Court in the year 1233, under Henry III., spent several months in this rude district of Elvael, not on account of the air or the scenery but for sterner reasons. Furthermore, when the Anglo-Norman kings meditated some great endeavour abroad or at home, or lay in apprehension of some impending blow against their power, it was not so much on the barons of Kent or Suffolk or Northampton that they kept their weather eye, but on these mightier potentates—the Clares and the Mortimers—the de Braoses of the South Wales marches, who may be said at times to have held in their hands the balance of national power.

Now Painscastle, or rather the mound on which it stood, lies in the south-west corner of this obscure Radnor country, some three or four miles to our right as we approach the village of Clyro. Here there was plenty of life in the 12th century, and enough of death for that matter, to fill the cup of local excitement to the brim. For one of the greatest battles of that period took place here, and all the trouble arose out of a treacherous deed done by William de Braose, the reigning power of that day in Brecon and Radnor, upon the person of a Brecon gentleman, one Trehearn Vaughan. This Lord Marcher, whose predilection for dark and wily ways has rung down the ages, is said to have invited the Welshman, to whom he owed an old grudge, to meet him on the road near Brecon for a friendly conference, and to have then caused him to be seized,

bound, tied to a horse's tail, and dragged through the streets of the town, to be subsequently beheaded and his body hanged on a public gallows.

Now Vaughan was a man of influence and position. What was more he was related to Gwenwynwyn, Prince of Powys, and such a dastardly act, following too on other even worse performances, was more than kinship, particularly Welsh kinship, could stand. Gwenwynwyn got up and swore a great oath that he would sweep de Braose's dominions so bare with fire and sword that not a stick or stone should be left standing within them. He then marched a large army to Painscastle and commenced operations by sitting down before its walls. Unfortunately the resistance offered was so stubborn that weeks passed away, and not only had de Braose's Marcher friends time to gather in strength to his assistance, but to facilitate matters they released from captivity Griffith ap Rhys—claimant to the throne of South Wales, and Gwenwynwyn's particular enemy,—who raised his people on the Norman side. Then there was a hurly-burly indeed in this corner of what we now call Radnorshire. Gwenwynwyn and his men fought valiantly against their triple foe, but were utterly discomfited, three thousand of them slain outright, and as many prisoners taken as were worth the trouble.

In the meantime the road has straggled for a moment out of the Wye valley in fetching Clyro, which is a village of some note for its general charm of appearance and situation. It is of the Herefordshire type, and includes an ancient and stately church. There is not much, however, to detain us here, or, if there is, we must resist temptation. In five minutes the ridge that parts us from the Wye valley is surmounted, and we are running down a straight incline which leads to the bridge over the river in front of the streets of Hay. Old Leland must have approached Hay by the same route:—"After passing over Wy river which for the lack of knowleg yn me of the Fourde did sore trouble my horse I came in crepusculo to the Hay. It

yet sheweth the token of a right strong waulle having in it three gates and a postern. The toune, within the waulles is wonderfully decaied. The ruine is adscribed to Owene Glindor."

This small but not undistinguished border town looks as well perhaps from here as anywhere. There was a ford of course or Hay would not be here, and so the river at this point spreads its clear streams over a broader bed and plays upon it with much light and motion and pleasant music. Along its further shore the ancient borough with a sufficiently venerable and, upon the whole, Welsh aspect straggles from the castle near its English limits to the church which, near the other, stands well poised upon a knoll above the river. Behind it are pleasant undulations of woodland and pasture suggestive of a snug country life in all its degrees, while standing boldly and finely up into the sky and dominating all are the Black Mountains of Brecon. On the north side of the river we have been in Radnor and in Wales for some time. But here on the southern bank, as befits a place with such strenuous memories, Brecon and Hereford clash at its very gates.

Hay or La Haie is an old Norman-French name signifying enclosure. Till quite lately all classes spoke of it, and even still some country people do, as "The Hay." It was a Southern Berwick in its way. As the Northumbrians and the men of the Merse forgathered for centuries in different parts of the Northern town, so there was "English Hay" and "Welsh Hay" in the days of old. But here, unlike Berwick, it was a case of two races, different in blood and language—a conquering one moreover and a conquered. Though there is a good deal left in Hay to suggest its ancient character to the reflective soul, there is really not much that I feel I can satisfactorily commit to paper in a comfortable English market town with a desirable "neighbourhood," a railway station, and most excellent cattle and sheep fairs. The antiquary or historian with Hay for their subject could, beyond a doubt, run their observations to the size of a fat pamphlet; but we are on our

way by devious tracks to the farther shores of Pembroke, which means that if we are to stop in Hay at all we must hurry to the castle which embodies the most noteworthy incidents in the records of the town. Not, however, in the building that we see before us, for nearly all of it save the outer gateway is Tudor and is inhabited to this day.

The inevitable Bernard de Newmarch annexed Hay in the course of his conquest of Brecon. A grantee, Phillip Walwyn, held it subsequently for a short time; but that luminous personage, William de Braose, soon obscures the memory of all past, as indeed he does of most later owners. He had succeeded to nearly the whole of the Newmarch domain. At Abergavenny Castle, so runs the tale, he had invited his Welsh neighbours to a sumptuous and friendly banquet. When the wine cup was flowing freely, and the harpers were all hard at work, he gave the signal for silence and demanded on the authority of Henry II., but more particularly "in the name of the Lord," which seems to have been a favourite formula with this unreliable person, that every one should give up their arms. This did not merely mean that they should deposit their daggers in a cloak room till the fun was over lest they should perchance hurt each other—which would have been a truly thoughtful and friendly suggestion—but his command had another significance altogether, and the fiery Welshmen, not rendered less so by copious libations of mead and the inspiring songs of the bards, indignantly refused. The hall was then filled in a moment with men equipped for slaughter, and in less than no time de Braose had turned his dinner party into a bloody shambles. All this, however, having occurred at Abergavenny, just across the Black Mountains yonder, is somewhat parenthetical, and may give only a one-sided view of the builder of Hay Castle, which de Braose appears to have been. A local legend attributes this last performance to his wife, a strenuous, notorious, yet withal really excellent woman, Maude de St. Valerie, known in Welsh lore

as "Moll Walbee." So lusty was she that she built the Castle of Hay in a single night, carrying the stones in her apron. She ruined her unprincipled husband, however, by her honesty, for she fell foul of King John for his scandalous conduct to Prince Arthur, and had the courage of her opinions; for when her own sons were demanded by the king as hostages for her husband's good conduct towards himself, she refused to deliver them up, in language that left no doubt as to her opinion of his Majesty. Her savage persecution by King John is too long a story for these pages, but that she tried to propitiate the tyrant by a present of four hundred "white cattle with red ears" to the queen is quoted by historians on account of what seems to them the singular pattern of the cattle. The authors of the Hereford herd book, however, would perhaps throw some light on this, as they hold that the original animal was of this marking, and they claim for the breed that they are one of the two or three original stocks in the island. But Moll Walbee and her son were eventually carried to Windsor and cast into a dungeon to perish miserably of starvation or disease.

On this account de Braose's estates were confiscated, but afterwards restored to his son, the Bishop of Hereford, whose brother and successor married a daughter of Llewelyn the Second or "The Great." Fighting on his father-in-law's side against the old family enemy, King John, his castle at Hay was plundered. It was destroyed soon after by the Welsh themselves in self defence, and eventually rebuilt by Henry III. during his Welsh wars, in a season when he had nothing else to do with his army of occupation. Llewelyn, however, verified the proverb that "fools build houses for wise men to live in" by seizing it, and putting a friend of his own in possession. Prince Edward, however, drove out Llewelyn's tenant, only to be ejected himself when Llewelyn's grandson, the last of the name and race allied with the Barons, had Henry III. and his son at their disposal.

After this it seemed advisable in the interests of peace to destroy a fortress that was such an incessant focus of strife. However, there would appear to have been enough of it left for Glyndwr to reckon its destruction among the triumphs of fire and sword which marked his desolating marches through this district, where he had many followers.

Glyndwr, to the Tudor, was as Cromwell to the modern tourist. Rightly or wrongly, he was responsible for every object of dilapidation west of the border. The "Deflor'd by Glindur" of old Leland and his informants quite possibly provoked the same cynical observations on the part of the Elizabethan traveller as "Dismantled by Cromwell" draws from the frivolous excursionist of to-day.

Passing through several Dukes of Buckingham, who were for a long time a power in Breconshire, into the hands of one Howell Gwyn, of Trecastle, the last named built the fine Tudor house which occupies the castle site to-day. Still further vicissitudes awaited the building, for in Queen Anne's time it was let in apartments to various families, while of late years it has been the very appropriate residence of one of the best known churchmen and antiquaries in South Wales.

The long winding street that carries us westward, out of Hay, without having much detail of a kind to catch the eye, still bears the stamp of an ancient abiding place and does not stultify, as do some places, its own traditions. There is nothing to provoke garrulity or to hinder our progress in this smooth road that runs up the Brecon bank of the Wye to Glasbury, three miles away. A country house or two among the woods on the Radnor slope catches the eye. And now Maesllwch Castle, built a century ago, and owned by the de Wintons, looms grey and huge against the background of its now matured plantations and not yet wholly tamed uplands.

Glasbury, which seems to bask under its protection, is a village which no traveller has ever failed, or could fail, to admire. Its old-fashioned, capacious houses and snug cottages lie

charmingly among orchards and tall swaying poplars on the flat Radnor bank of the river, while other portions of it, and the parish church, are perched picturesquely on the uplands of the Brecon shore. Between them, the Wye, broad, sparkling, and shallow, spanned by a light bridge, completes a charming picture from the road above. The Black Mountains on our left are now showing up in a fashion worthy of Wales, and their dark, heathery summits, rising here and there above the bright green of the middle heights and the rich woods of the foothills, look amazingly imposing for the modest altitude of the 2,500 feet that marks their greatest effort in this particular group. This last divides just here, in most effectual fashion, the valleys of the Wye and Usk. A bird can fly in a few minutes from Glasbury to Crickhowel. A shepherd could walk it in two or three hours; but as to the ordinary folk of either, they might live in different planets. What a wild little block of mountain it is too, this eighty square miles of complete, uncompromising solitude. How dark and deep and sombre the gorges. How silent the hills, where grouse lie fairly thick in the big tracts of heather. How striking the frequent blush of the red sandstone against the greener slope, where the teeth or tread of hungry sheep and the downward rush of storms have scarred the mountain side.

Though the levels of the Wye are still broad and fertile, the big, babbling, easy-going river is evidently drawing near to another phase of its existence. The lower hills of Brecon are rising right across our path and blocking the valley. A sharp turn is unmistakably imminent, and another sort of country would seem in store for us. We are, indeed, actually running into a much used artery of Welsh travel, and the little line from Hereford, which more or less has kept us company all this time, strikes here at right angles into the Cambrian railroad and dumps out its passengers at the famous junction with the euphonious name of the "Three Cocks." I use the above epithet because most South Walians and border people who

move about at all have spent a certain portion of their lives on its ample and extended platforms, and must regard its name with mingled feelings. There they still meet old friends, who perhaps they would never meet otherwise, and there they catch colds they would not otherwise catch. The "Three

The Wye near Aberedw.

Cocks" is not a junction of the Bletchley or the Rugby type. When calm reigns here in summer days you may listen to the birds singing in the trees, the brooks gurgling in the fields, and even hear the cows crunching the grass. And when the trains pour out their loads, the enforced loiterer will find much to engage

and, perhaps, divert him in the rural types. Here Welsh and English meet on common ground, and here you will probably encounter the ancient tongue for the first time. Not that it is in use within a dozen miles of the "Three Cocks." But there will be small graziers from Western Breconshire, where it still obtains, discussing the price of stock at Hereford or Hay. Old ladies, too, from Merioneth or Carnarvonshire, who have been on a visit to married sons or daughters in the coal districts will peradventure be wrestling with the scant Welsh of a Radnorshire porter. But English, with a stronger Welsh accent than we have yet heard, will be by far the most prevalent note. And all these people—rosy-faced farmers, black-bearded, tall-hatted preachers, buxom matrons, light-hearted maidens bound for Llandrindod or Llanwrtyd Wells—will have more to say to each other by a great deal than the people at Bletchley or Basingstoke. A very ancient Saxon calumny relates how "the cackling and babbling of the Welsh in Paradise" was found to be such an intolerable nuisance to the others, that Peter was requested to find some way of abating it. Having completely failed to do so by ordinary methods, the illustrious seneschal concluded that there was nothing for it but the extreme measure of reducing their numbers. As stratagem of some kind was required for this scheme, he bethought him of the passion for toasted cheese which possessed the Welsh nation at the period to which this legend belongs, and, following up this happy inspiration, he caused a great shout of "cause bobl, cause bobl," to be raised outside the gates of Paradise. This had the desired effect, and all the Welshmen within hearing came rushing out in a body, after which Peter closed the gates permanently upon them, greatly reducing thereby the number of those inside, to the contentment of the others.

The celebrated old coaching inn, though some half-mile distant, which has given its name, for lack of a better one, to the station, should not be missed, for it is as fine a specimen of a spacious, rambling, old-fashioned hostelry as the heart could

desire, and is steeped in highway lore. Standing on the road, though just sufficiently withdrawn to save its dignity, it rears a fine collection of chimney stacks above its brown stone roof, and shows a display of windows in its L-shaped front, whose fine disregard for each other's position and proportion might be the envy of a modern architect. The back of the house is, if possible, yet more delightfully suggestive of various bygone epochs, and through thick clusters of ivy and creepers, peeps out upon a garden, orchard and watermill, all worthy of the ancient fabric. A chapter might easily be written on the "Three Cocks," and I have gone out of my way more than once for the mere pleasure of spending a night there.

In the days of road travel, this old inn filled somewhat the same position as the adjacent railway junction does to-day. Coaches from England dropped passengers here to find their way North and South or West, as best they could, and here stage waggons dumped down heavy packages from London, addressed to places with mysterious Breconshire names, "To be left till called for at the 'Three Cocks.'"

Shooting parties stay here now in the autumn, while a few discreet and quiet people from England, who have grown fond of the Black Mountains and the Wye valley, and are indifferent to "all the modern conveniences," are to be found here in the summer months. Formerly, it was a great haunt of the salmon fisher, for some of the best reaches in the Wye are hereabouts. If the Wye recovers, it may be so again. Everything about the "Three Cocks" is conservative. It has been in the same family for time out of my mind. The few people who come here for rest and quiet keep on coming till they die or are paralysed. The incident of the three old anglers is known far beyond the Wye valley and is quite a pathetic one. It is merely a case of three friends, salmon fishers, hailing, I think, from different parts, who forgathered here every season from comparative youth, till one by one they died off in old age. I am wrong! one, at this writing, survives and still haunts the

spot, but can no longer wield a rod, which is indeed the climax of a pathetic story. I could tell of another similar but not quite so protracted a partnership in North Wales, indeed, I knew the parties. The first gap came last year, the thirtieth, if I mistake not, of their connection. In this case there was a fourth but fully recognised partner, for the last decade, at any rate; a terrier dog, whom I continually trod on, till I understood that if life in that particular fishing inn was to be worth living, it was only by recognising the vested right of this sacred tyke to the centre spot of the rug before the fire.

But in the "Three Cocks" there is a large upstair room, looking over the road, devoted to the coteries of sportsmen who periodically forgather here, and to the memories of those who have long ceased to. There is a capacious cupboard here beside the fireplace, kept religiously locked, wherein lies a heterogeneous medley of weapons connected with the gentle art, if, wading all day up to the middle in a strong current and wielding an eighteen-foot rod, can indeed be called by that misplaced term. I have stood before that open cupboard with mine hostess, and, upon my word, though the owners of the strange collection within it, both quick and dead, are nothing but names to me, I have felt something like a lump rising in my throat. "There are Mr. Smith's waders, poor gentleman, just as he left them. Dear me! it must be twenty years or more since he was first took ill. Keep them, Mrs. W., till I come again. If I don't want them at the 'Three Cocks,' I shall want them nowhere." Here is an old Castle Connel rod with a yellow stained label on it. "Yes, sir, that is Mr. Topjoint's. If he is alive he must be an old gentleman now, but when he left off coming I wrote to his old address and never got no answer; he must surely be dead; but there it is if he ever comes for it." I do not fancy Mr. Topjoint will ever come for it! Here, again, is an old basket with a fly book inside, on whose contents the moths battened long ages ago. "Ah, yes, sir, that belonged to the Reverend Mr. Snapgut. He *was* a one to catch salmon,

but I did hear that he was drowned in Australia or Canada, or some such place." Here are old boots, there a tattered landing net or a rusty gaff; even a hat, whose uncanny shape carries one away back to the days of one's youth. "Yes, sir, there is everything just as the gentlemen left 'em, if they should ever happen to come for them"; and I fancied there was just a catch in my hostess's voice, though she is a practical person and came herself from Lincolnshire, which would be all against such weaknesses.

As I sat smoking a pipe alone in the dim light of this big chamber one stormy autumn night not very long ago, I could not keep my thoughts on the well thumbed yellow novel, itself a relic of the same epoch. They would drift towards that eloquently silent cupboard and people, the dim old room with the forms of those departed anglers—so happy with their whisky and tobacco, their tremendous stories, their triumphs looming large in the thick and genial atmosphere, their disappointments and their blank days forgotten. To-night, however, the grate was black and empty, for I was but a passing traveller and it was only September. But the wind roared around the forest of chimneys on the inn roof and the rain beat against the big window in a way that would have gladdened the hearts of any gathering of fishermen when the Wye was the Wye. For the once famous river seems now in a truly parlous state. Whether it is dry years, increasing pike, or too much netting down below is of no consequence to us here, though of very much indeed to owners and lessees. "I have seen poor Mr. Topjoint, sir, bring in three fine fish of a morning, and now we don't see that much in a whole season." And Mrs. W. is only uttering a too common tale.

We are here just at the parting of the ways. The one we have been travelling pursues its even course to Brecon, while our future road turns sharp to the right with a view to following the Wye Valley in its sudden swerve to the northward. We cross the Llyfni, which has babbled gently through undulating fields from the low-lying mere of Llangorse—the largest lake

in South Wales and almost within sight. By this woody channel, as innocent-looking a trout stream as ever eye beheld, came and still come the accursed pike, who prey like ravening wolves on Wye trout and jostle Wye salmon out of their favourite resting places. Roberts, of Builth, the well-known professional fisherman, who has earned the right to theories of his own, holds that the king of fishes will treat the presence of one or two pike in his vicinity with contemptuous indifference, but that when they get thicker the neighbourhood becomes too vulgar for him, and he moves restlessly on, to the loss of the angler when he puts his "Jock Scott" over the accustomed spot.

We have left Tregoed and Gwernyfed behind us. The first, a seat of the Hereford family, is now ashes, having been not long ago consumed by fire; the second is an old Tudor Manor-house where Charles I. stopped in his Welsh wanderings. Here too, back from the road, is another Tudor house, a beautiful old mansion with a long many-gabled front and huge out-buildings. This is Dderw[1]; the Morgans of Dderw and Ystradfellte having been for long a power in the land, and indeed a Morgan owns it yet, Lord Tredegar. But for the best part of a century it has been a farmhouse, and I should imagine is about the finest farmhouse in Wales, being as desirable within from an antiquary's point of view as without. We soon pass Llyswen, where the princes of South Wales are said once to have had a palace. A village and an old church stand there now overlooking a most striking horseshoe bend of the Wye. Boughrood, on the far or Radnor side of the river, with its long venerable wooden bridge thrown over to our side, comes next, a good instance of a corrupted border place name, Bach-rhyd (the little ford), but answering to the name of Bo kroot.

Till quite lately we were travelling south-westwards through a country overlooked, it is true, by mountains, but still soft and gracious, and by a river which, though clear and rapid, struck

[1] The Rev. Charles Bradley, vicar of Glasbury, author of *Bradley's Sermons*, etc., and father of the late Dean of Westminster, resided here early in the last century.

no angry notes between its meadowy banks. But now we have turned to the north, and the whole scene is rapidly changing. The hills are closing upon us. Woods are pressing down to the water's edge, and the river itself is roaring loudly in rocky and contracted channels with but brief intervals of quiet, if indeed the heaving salmon pool can be thus described. There was a castle once at Boughrood, but it was "deflor'd," as Leland would say, long before Glyndwr. Higher up, on the Radnor side, comes down the beautiful dingle of the Matchway, where, perched upon a lofty crag over a deep gorge, another now vanished castle once stood. Its owner was a wicked Welsh Prince, whose favourite pastime was hurling the captives of his bow and spear off the battlements into the torrent beneath.

Fishing boxes, however, are now more in evidence than castles, for this is the most celebrated stretch of the river. Llanoyre, however, Lord Glanusk's place, is very much more than a fishing box, and its woods, which wave in such luxuriance along the river bank and far up the hillside, were the admiration of travellers even a century ago. Dr. Malkin, whose generation were only just learning to appreciate wild scenery, declared as he passed along here that those who only knew the Wye about Tintern did not know the Wye at all, and he was surely right.

It is eight miles from here to Builth, and as we approach Erwood, the only village on the Brecon bank, or yet more perhaps after passing it, a backward glance will be well repaid by the beautiful fashion in which the Black Mountains fill in the gap between the high and wooded walls of the valley. Beyond Erwood there is another bridge, and the river for a long way above it, fretted by boulders and ridges of Silurian rock, is in a continual state of turmoil. Freshets come down the Wye, too, with incredible suddenness and often with scarcely any warning. Fishermen have actually been caught and swept away and drowned before they could wade ashore. It is only two or three years, indeed, since the last accident happened, and the victim, moreover, was young, active, and experienced.

It is well worth while, if time allows, to cross Erwood bridge and climb to the top of the rock-crowned hill of Garth above the little station, for the Cambrian railway is all this time working its way through the woodlands on the Radnor shore. A pleasant walk of turf up the long heather and bracken slope almost invites you to the summit, and when this is reached you have your reward. Queen of all Welsh rivers, surely, is this one! The Dee has a dozen miles as fine or finer than the best of it. The Usk has yet longer stretches of surpassing beauty. But it is fifty miles from Glasbury to the wild slopes of Plinlimmon which give the Wye its birth, and almost every mile is instinct with beauty, not merely of a satisfying, pleasing kind, but such as compels admiration of a fervent order. I am not going to weary the reader with any picture of the prospect from the summit of Garth. There are higher hills by far all round from which he might get an even better one, for this is but some five hundred feet above the valley, yet so easy of ascent and of such ready access to a railway station, it is perhaps more noteworthy on this account. At any rate, he will from hence look down on the Wye foaming along the woody base of opposing hills much higher than his own perch, and if the day is waning, they will be wrapt in dark shadows, while the Black Mountains, now far away to the south, will be no longer black, but, catching the sunlight that still comes streaming from the open west along the Vale of Usk, glow with a brilliancy more fervid from its contrast to the deepening shadows of the foreground. This at least is how I remember it, not from here only, but from the more ambitious summit of Aberedw hill, which we shall pass anon.

I have spoken more than once of Dr. Malkin. Thirty years before he travelled through South Wales, another divine, and one perhaps better known, Mr. Gilpin, of Cumbrian family, but a vicar in the New Forest, wrote upon the Wye. Of things in general he unfortunately tells us little. The grouping and colouring of natural objects as influencing their artistic effect,

he dwells on with pedantic wealth of detail, but in matter-of-fact analytical fashion, which deprecates any suggestions of poetic intent. Indeed, the reverend gentleman is delightfully candid on the art of what would be now called word-painting and its inefficiency. There are but four letters, he says, in Nature's alphabet, "wood, water, mountain, and ground, but each of a thousand indescribable moods." This was in 1770. The "Richmond Hill" style of landscape was still the prevailing idea. The glories of flood and mountain were only just dawning on the popular mind, and Mr. Gilpin was ahead of his time in anticipating Dr. Malkin in his preference for this stretch of the Wye over the Chepstow and Tintern reach, and he gives many and precise reasons for this preference. This Wye-side road to Builth from the "Three Cocks," admirable as it is from every point of view to travel on, and main artery of road communication between Mid and South Wales as it must be, is an uncommonly lonely one. Agriculture of any kind has no great scope in this long winding gorge. Away among the hill-tops and beyond them, the small Welsh farmer, whether of Brecon or Radnor, tends his flocks and broods over the respective merits of parson and preacher, and the price of "stores," without much concern for twentieth century innovations. But down here in the valley habitations are few and far between and travellers to match, unless it be the inevitable tramps whom the Birmingham waterworks at Rhayader scatter over the roads of Radnor and Brecon, and whose sinister looks I only hope belie them. One would say the pheasant and the salmon, and those whom in various ways they concerned, were the chief factors of existence, not forgetting the rabbit, who seems to greatly flourish, and the squirrel, who scuttles over the boughs of the great oak and beech trees which for such long periods shade the road. Beyond their shade, too, and between their big trunks, we can generally see the white foam of the water and always hear its voice, for throughout the whole length of the road it is, as

quaint old Mr. Gilpin would say, "our constant and amusing companion." Aberedw rocks present the most striking instance of those bold outcrops of the Silurian system which give unexpected dignity to so many scenes in South Wales. This one is the joy of geologists, and rising terrace upon terrace over the Radnor bank of the Wye to a height of seven or eight hundred feet, may be accounted also an object of delight to the mere traveller. Beyond this precipitous confusion of cliff and wood, and turf and bracken, the lovely stream of the Edw, once noted for its trout, but now sorely depleted, leaps down a wooded gorge into the Wye. Perched at some height above the confluence, stands the hamlet of Aberedw, with its ancient church, its castle site and its abiding memories of the last Llewelyn. Aberedw may be reached from the Brecon side by a primitive but sufficient ferry boat, and is worth the effort. For the dingle in which the Edw spends its last half-mile is deep and striking, and Drayton's pretty thought that it bears the message of the wood nymphs "from far Radnorian forests" to the Wye on the sad state of the ancient British race, is above the level of that industrious and original Elizabethan town. The castle, whose fragments look down upon the noisy torrent below, was a hunting seat of Llewelyn ap Griffith, but its sentimental import is due to the fact of its having been the last roof to shelter that ill-fated prince, and its connection with his tragic end and the quenching of the last flickering spark of Welsh independence. It is a pity that this final scene of the drama should be more cloudy than many of less importance before it.

It will be remembered how the last Llewelyn, partly by force of arms, partly by the "power of love," as the old chroniclers said, for Simon de Montfort's daughter had been compelled to sign a treaty with Edward, giving up everything but the four cantrefs of Snowdon (Carnarvonshire), and holding even those on humiliating conditions. He was not long to sit content under such ignoble terms. His young wife died. King

Edward's deputies in Wales made life so wretched in the districts they tyrannised over that it was no longer worth living, and revolt once more was rife. Llewelyn's brother, Dafydd, hitherto an adherent of the English King, now at this singularly hopeless and dangerous moment turned patriot and appealed to the Prince of Gwynedd. Perhaps the latter's conscience pricked him, for though he spent a long life in fighting, he is said to have been a lover of peace. Perhaps his compassion was moved by the misery around him. The absence of motive, or rather the hopelessness of the business, would for once justify one in crediting a mediæval hero, who, though a great warrior, was not a lover of war, with pure unselfish heroism. In these pages at any rate we may surely do so. How he joined his brother and roused North Wales, and had gained some early advantage on the Menai, does not concern the South. But there were yet forces even in much conquered South Wales, who retained the spirit and means sufficient to join in this desperate venture. It was to confer with these allies, or to hearten them, that Llewelyn came South as far at any rate as Aberedw, where, presumably as a private individual, he owned this castle.

Here there seems to have been some miscalculation. The Prince was surprised by the English, and had with his men to beat a hasty retreat. A cave is shown in the woody cliff beyond the torrent, where he is said to have lurked in hiding. This last seems a legend, and an unlikely addition to the tale which says the English came suddenly upon the prince, and that he had only just time to retreat on Builth with his small force. Some say the bridge at Builth was held for a time by Llewelyn's people against the English, but in any case the townsfolk, on whose goodwill he had counted, refused at this critical moment to open their gates to him. Then, and as one cherished but unconvincing tradition says, with reversed horses' shoes, for snow was on the ground, Llewelyn, passing behind Builth, crossed the Irfon a mile or so above its confluence. Here he halted his men for a time, but the enemy,

being shown a ford across the river, got over unawares and routed his party. The Prince was parted from his friends in the confusion and killed in the dingle which runs up from the Irfon to the village bearing the historic name of Cefn y bedd Llewelyn, "the bank of the grave of Llewelyn." He was cut down and badly wounded by one Adam Francton, who in the heat of the fray or pursuit had paid no heed to the quality of his victim, but on returning, for purposes no doubt of plunder, became aware of the significance of his deed. He then cut the Prince's head off and forwarded it to Edward at Conway, who sent it for the inspection of his army to Snowdonia. Thence it was carried to London and, crowned with ivy, in mockery of the old Welsh prophecy that a Welsh Prince should yet ride crowned down Cheapside, was borne aloft on a spear-head through shouting crowds to the Tower. Here, nailed above the gateway, it awaited the company of that other grizzly trophy which was to take its place there a few months later, the head of the unfortunate Dafydd. The stain of having refused a refuge to Llewelyn, and therefore causing his death, rested on the men of Builth for ever afterwards. The "Braddwr Buallt," "the Traitor of Builth," passed into a phrase, and it is quite surprising how lightly the stigma sits on the present inhabitants of the wayside town, to which we must now hurry on without further dalliance.

To go down the river again and re-cross the ferry to the main road would, in mere point of time, be our shortest way to Builth. But there is no reason why we should not take the lane along the Radnor side of the river by which the farmers of Aberedw get on to the hard highway which runs from New Radnor to Builth. There is a full three miles of rough and tortuous by-way before this excellent artery is reached, but there is sufficient consolation for the rudeness of the path in the glorious glimpse one gets above the tree-tops, or framed within their trunks and foliage, of the river below and the mountains towering above. Aberedw hill thrusts its huge back,

to all seeming, across our path, which has to struggle round between its gorse and heath-clad base and the river. On the other shore the woodlands reaching far up the side of Esgoig and Alltmawr fade away into the ruder altitude of the Epynt range. Sometimes too we dive out of sight of all these grander objects into some dingle where a tributary brook, hurrying down through damp grassy hollows, bright with marsh marigolds, drowns with its piping voice the murmur of the Wye. Here and there a small farm-house, buried in orchards, for cider is made even thus far from the Hereford border, abuts on the road. Now a farmer, mounted on a stout pony and attended by his little pack of clever collies, not, I may remark, of the immaculate black and tan shade we see in shows, goes jogging homeward from Builth to the Edw Vale. Here again is a farmer's lady in a riding skirt surmounted by suggestions of last year's fashions, but with a good, honest, old-time market basket on her arm, perched on a half-bred cart-horse; there, an ass-cart crawling beneath the burden of a witch-like old woman in woollen shawl and frilled cap and billycock hat, who only lacks the pointed beaver of thirty years ago to make her character complete.

There are compensations, however, in emerging from this Arcadian labyrinth on to the main road beyond a sympathy for one's tyres. For the Wye valley opens somewhat here; the hills cease to press so close upon the river, and in the centre of the scene, with its long many-arched bridge spanning the rapids and its background of woods, the little town of Builth nestles beneath its blue smoke wreaths. We approach it in company with the Cambrian railway, which has struggled alongside of us through this ten mile gorge from Boughrood on the Radnor bank in most singularly inoffensive fashion, giving its passengers as great a treat in river scenery as can be enjoyed probably on any journey of a like kind in the country. Yet there will be no tourists to speak of in the train, no char-à-bancs and scarcely any bicycles upon the road. You

might spend a week among the young curlews on Aberedw hill or a month on the sheep walks of the Epynt range without meeting a soul but the tenant of the waste. No modern poet of note has celebrated the splendours of the Upper Wye or tapped the deep fount of South Wales scenery and South Wales lore. Both Scott and Wordsworth came and saw. Each felt the inspiration. Wordsworth relieved it in a charming sonnet on a ruined castle, in his famous lines on Tintern, and his stanzas to the two old ladies of Llangollen, for which they wanted to box his ears. Scott in *The Betrothed*, where he shows himself to be neither at his best, nor on familiar ground.

Builth is quite a nice little town in itself, and beyond a doubt is most delightfully as well as conveniently situated, but I would advise an intending visitor to avoid the actual holiday season, when it is given over to the Joes and Jills of the Glamorgan collieries, who flock hither to drink the most potent saline water that the heart of dyspeptic could desire, and to wash it down, when the day's *régime* is over, with generous libations of Cwrw-dda. I have tasted a tumbler or two of this efficient liquid, and far from wishing to cast aspersions on these sons of darkness who would drown the memory, even if they neutralise the effect of the morning's cure in mildly hilarious fashion, I should myself want something stronger than Buckley's ale as a restorative.

But I must not treat with levity so time-honoured an institution and cure as Builth Wells, which contains two or three springs, with a pumphouse and grounds nearly a mile out of the town. I know nothing of them medicinally, but, in the interests of potential readers, I felt bound last summer to sample the saline tap on which I believe Builth chiefly plumes itself. I am bound to admit, though not over squeamish in such trifles, that it nearly knocked me down. But then, I am neither a collier nor a Welsh farmer, who, I believe, imbibe it by the bucketful. The farmers come here between turnip-

sowing and the maturing of the late hay crop, though what these rosy sons of the mountain want with medicinal waters I do not know. The preachers are here in force at all times. But this social habit of the mass of the Welsh people has run a good deal to inland watering places, and the idea that nature's fountains are the best doctors is more prevalent than among the same classes in England. Indeed, there is no possible comparison. For the humbler English folk do not frequent healing springs. So far as I know, there is nowhere any accommodation adjusted to their means.

Now in Wales this is quite different. The almost universal system of the lodging-houses is to let bedrooms only, and to retain a single common sitting-room where the various occupants have their meals, buying, if they wish it, their own provisions. This is obviously prohibitive to visitors of a different type, but it is a great boon to vast numbers of people who feel no inconvenience from such a system, and indeed, rather enjoy it, and can take their holiday and get their sulphur, saline, or chalybeate waters in economical fashion. Llandrindod has in part outgrown these primitive arrangements which once, to a large extent, distinguished it, and offers every class of accommodation. But Builth, Llanwrtyd, and Llangammarch still flourish largely on these democratic lines, though even here there are of course a few exceptional places where quarters of a more exclusive kind can be acquired. Good quarters are, no doubt, the present drawback to holiday residence in South Wales away from the sea-coast. Country town hotels that do well enough for Quarter Sessions, for the passing tourist, or the commercial traveller, are quite unsuited for lighter purposes or more prolonged sojourn. Farmhouses, such as those of North Wales or the Lake Country, where plain, comfortable accommodation can be had, are so scarce as to be not worth mentioning, though a demand for them would no doubt soon stir up the farming folk to qualify in this capacity. But there has been so far almost no demand, while as to the lack of supply I may

speak confidently with some experience, and the result of inquiries made throughout the most likely portions of the most likely counties. Inland hotels which cater for well-to-do holiday makers could almost be counted on the fingers of one hand, as we shall have cause to note later.

But the water-drinking and very modern suburbs of Builth have, after all, little concern with us. The little old town itself, of such sinister historic memories, which are more than counterbalanced by one of the best stock markets in Wales, has not much perhaps to catch the eye of the antiquary, but it has much individuality all the same. There is a fine bridge of eight arches, for instance, over the impetuous Wye: not the one Llewelyn's men wished to cross, but a later one, built in the eighteenth century, which lands you at once in the High Street. The Wye has approached the town in a long, straight reach, at the head of which, near a mile away, you can see from the centre of the bridge the stir of the waters glistening where the main river and the Irfon meet under pendant woods. In flood time, too, nay, in a half-flood, the river pours under the arches of the bridge its burden of peaty water with such fury as to afford the more indolent characters of Builth prolonged entertainment, while great ledges of rock a few yards below dash the swift rushing stream into great cataracts of foam. Above the eastern end of the town, where the bridge joins it, the castle mound lifts high its now bare and grassy head. Not a stone remains, but ditch and foss and rampart still suggest the strength and glory of a vanished fortress of great importance. Unlike most of Brecon and Radnor, the lordship of Builth seems never to have been included in the Newmarch conquest, though it fell in time to the all-devouring de Braoses or Bruces, and subsequently went to the Mortimers, and its history, save the Llewelyn incident, which has left a curse upon it, was a long struggle between its owners and the Welsh princes.

A long and narrow street, stretching away from near the

bridge to the church at the far end of the old town, contains the bulk of Builth enterprise, solidity and wealth. The church is a fine one, much restored, but possessed of a squat and ancient tower, and a spacious graveyard, shaded by rows of trees and crossed by thoroughfares which give an almost collegiate atmosphere to the quarter. In the tower is the recumbent figure of a knight, one John Lloid of Towy, who is described as squire of the body to Queen Elizabeth, and no doubt had his ears boxed from time to time by his high-spirited mistress. As an ancestor to many people in the neighbourhood, however, he is naturally a popular character, and must be treated respectfully.

Between the town and the river is a delightful grassy strip of common land where the inhabitants of Builth, on Sundays and holidays, disport themselves, and the water drinkers in the season walk or play off the effects of their deep and mixed potations. There is a charming view too from here, down the river, with a foreground of swaying poplar trees, and a bright sheen of water rushing beneath the bridge towards the great mass of Aberedw hill beyond. Across the Wye the wooded heights of Wellfield smile down upon the town, while in the background pleasant and green uplands trend away towards the dominating shoulder of the Epynt range.

CHAPTER III

No part of South Wales, I should imagine, concerns itself less than Builth about what the Welsh rustic calls "Anshant things," including under that comprehensive term everything from a Tudor Manor-house to an Ogham stone. Perhaps this is not unnatural seeing what opprobrious epithets history has hurled at its inhabitants, who, I daresay on this very account, hold that it is better to let sleeping dogs lie. But the blood of Llewelyn, if it does indeed rest at their doors, was of a truth sufficiently avenged in the seventeenth century when a terrible conflagration destroyed the entire town. The Crown granted letters patent, we are told, to the houseless people to circulate a petition for assistance through all the towns of the kingdom, a proceeding which seems to have been quite usual in the days before insurance companies enabled the victims of fire to re-establish themselves with more certainty and self-respect. A voucher is still extant, relating that a parish (name illegible) in Lincolnshire subscribed the sum of "eaght shill one fardin" towards the relief of the poor sufferers of Bealt in their great loss by fire. The Old Crown Hotel, which is about the only building in the place combining antiquity with any dignity, was probably built out of this fund. But with regard to antiquity, there will be found, some distance up the hill along whose foot the main street runs, an old wool market whose low squat

houses of stone might well be survivors of Builth's pre-conflagration days. Hence emanate, the police will tell you, such rough characters as no town of even two thousand souls can quite shake off. Fish poachers, loafers, and unduly hilarious people who attend neither chapels, musical gatherings (except of an undesirable sort), nor follow other peaceful pastimes, and find the monotony of the long winter evenings greater than they can bear.

Builth was at one time a great centre of otter hunting. One of the best known exponents of that craft who ever lived, and whose name it would be superfluous to indicate in Wales, or on the border, resided in the neighbourhood, and had a great partiality for the people of Builth, who followed his horn along the banks of the Wye and Irfon, and would have died for him. "The fact is, sir," said a highly respectable sporting tradesman of my acquaintance, "the place has never been quite the same since the Colonel died. He spoilt us, sir. When the hounds was in the town people could just walk into the —— Arms and eat and drink whatever they chose. It got so at one time that Builth folks thought nothing but champagne was good enough for them." I myself remember, as a small boy, gazing with awe at the six feet four inches of the redoubtable Colonel, then a young Guardsman, wallowing with his hounds in the deeps of a Shropshire river—and he stood the water for a quarter of a century after that, and lived to see scores of rivals in the trade, whereas he had in those days not half a dozen in the whole kingdom.

But this was Builth in its lighter moments, and it has very serious ones, and none more so than when it holds its fairs, for, as I have said, it is one of the best stock markets in South Wales. It has not succeeded, however, in shaking off the time-honoured but inconvenient custom of holding these functions in its main street, which for the most part is some twenty feet wide, and presents on these momentous occasions a scene of indescribable and congested animation. Every vendor of stock is strained

to the uttermost to keep his bunch of terrified four-footed wares separate from those of his neighbours. Such a capering and bellowing of Herefords of all ages. Such tossing of long horns, such whack, whacking of sticks, such shouting of men and barking of collies never was heard in so cramped a space. Should you need on such occasions a packet of cigarettes, or a daily paper, you will very likely have to displace, as best you may, the hind quarters of a Hereford ox from your tobacconist's threshold before an entry can be effected, or fight your way stick in hand through a mob of two year olds towards the chemist's door. The tradesmen of Builth are naturally very strong reformers in the matter of this ancient usage; the publicans, I take it, represent the conservative side of the question—and the opposite one.

It is a thoroughly characteristic gathering, however, this Builth fair, and representative of Welsh border life. The languages mingle here to some extent, though, as a regular tongue, Welsh has fallen back from the Wye, within the last century, some five to ten miles, and now follows a wavering line from the top of the Epynt range across the Irfon valley into the congenial mountain wilderness to the northward, where it will long no doubt defy the aggressor. There is plenty of Welsh, however, spoken even in Builth town, and on market days there are many visitors who can speak nothing else. The native tongue seems to yield more readily in the south than in the north. Nor is there much of that robustness which maintains it on the Flintshire coast within cannon shot of the suburbs of Liverpool. Probably the influence of English-speaking Welshmen is more seductive than that of an English border county.

Of men and women you will see every type at Builth fair, though the women of Wales generally, I think, run more nearly on a pattern than their English sisters; the working women, or farmers' wives, that is to say. It takes fewer of them to fill up a road, when walking abreast, than on this side the border.

But despite their high average of cubic measurement, there is yet a look of latent activity about their sturdy frames, and a capacity in their square jaws and brown, wholesome faces. There are all kinds of men about among the cattle. Long young men with sunburnt faces and sandy hair, and lean legs, encased in breeches and gaiters, and a horsey look, suggestive of Radnor and the East bank of the Wye. There are squat, wrinkled veterans of scanty inches, with furrowed faces and beetling eyebrows, and a scrap of black whisker by the ear, arrayed in that peculiarly antediluvian style you scarcely ever see, save among small farmers when compromising between their Sunday broad-cloth and their working clothes. There are men of the world, the world of horn and hoof and hide, that is to say; dealers with big, full-moon faces in which the colour of thousands of bargain-sealing whiskey toddies would seem to be ever mantling; burly, self-satisfied institutions rather than men, for they are everywhere, with thumbs in the armholes of their waistcoats, and their hats tilted backward on their heads. There are shy, careworn-looking beings too, sallow of face and black of hair, from the back of the Epynt or the head of the Irfon, who have little or no English perhaps, whose visits to town are few and far between, and, when undertaken, mean serious business and some anxious moments. The cattle, however, show no such variety; they are practically all Herefords, and what sheep are there are Radnors or little mountaineers.

But by mid day it is all over. Black Welshmen and red Welshmen and sturdy, brown-faced women have all cleared out, and are travelling along the country roads on wheels or horse-back or a-foot. In the days of yore they all rode, and mostly raced, upon the homeward journey, some with black eyes, and most of them the worse for liquor. Now, the whole company might be returning from an open air preaching.

In former times, Builth seems to have been a somewhat roystering little town. What could have been expected of the periodical meeting place of a thousand lusty stock farmers,

with just sufficient points of rivalry among them to make things lively when the Cwrw flowed? For the Breconian, as I have said, has his notions of the Radnorian, that look harmless in respectable prose, but could no doubt be irritating if put into heady language over the festive cup. The Radnorian, too, in his slower, more Saxon fashion, has his views upon the other, and as he sits on the gate dividing his mountain from his farm, his collies at his feet, will jerk his head in the direction of the Wye and those who live beyond it, with a world of meaning in the gesture. In former days, these mutual criticisms were apt to be emphasised with fist or stick, and those days were the ones old men like chiefly to tell of.

There is, of a truth, very little drinking now in rural Wales. With the colliers' habits we are not concerned, as the regions he inhabits are not within our tour. But the farming classes appear to be extremely sober. Even the village parliament, which, in England, discusses the nation's affairs in the village public, has no serious parallel in Wales, for the detached cottage renting labourer, who is the mainstay of such gatherings, scarcely exists, and the farmer has other interests to keep him at home.

A lady of considerable note in her day, on more than one account, used to haûnt Builth and its neighbourhood about a hundred years ago. This was Lady Hester Stanhope, who, as the eldest niece of the second Pitt, presided over that great man's establishment during the last years of his life. At his death, she kept house in London with two of her brothers, both army officers, for a year or so, and remained a person of much social importance and some eccentricity. The battle of Corunna broke up the establishment, for the elder of the two brothers was killed. The second was with General Moore when he died, and Colonel Anderson, who was holding Moore's hand, relates the General's last words to have been "Stanhope, remember me to your sister."

The exact causes of Lady Hester's low spirits, ill-health, and disgust with Society are no concern of ours here. Her travels

about the world, her curious and not wholly amiable traits, will be familiar to some, at any rate, of my readers. Many of her letters to her humble friends at Builth, giving minute directions as to the colour of her wall-paper, the killing of her mutton, and the mixing of door-paint, hint at her state of mind towards Society, and a transcript of these curious effusions may be read in the life of one of her *protégés* mentioned below.

Lady Hester had first found her way to Builth in the summer of 1808. She then occupied the "Royal Oak," which has been succeeded by the "Lion," the chief hotel in the place to-day. She formed violent attachments to one or two young persons in the place, taking them long tours on horseback with her through the wild parts of South Wales, their baggage strapped on pack-horses. The most favoured of these was one Thomas Price (Carnhuanawc), a clergyman's son, who afterwards took orders, and became one of the most distinguished literary Welshman of his time.

Service in the train of this strong-minded fugitive from fashionable life was probably not an unmixed joy. She was an enthusiastic amateur in the healing art, for one thing, even at the comparatively tender age of thirty. She prescribed vigorously for the sick of Builth, and, being of an active and aggressive temperament, took good care, we may be sure, that there was no shirking on the part of her victims. In this summer, too, quite a blaze of fashionable splendour seems to have illumined the remote Welsh town, for Lord Kensington and his family, we learn, were at another hotel. This notable event might have been lost to the annals of the town, had not his lordship's child swallowed an ear-ring and set the whole place agog. Mercifully, or otherwise, Lady Hester was at hand, and took charge of the case, while Builth, with the exception perhaps of the local chirurgeon, looked on with admiration and bated breath. At this supreme moment, the chronicle comes suddenly to a stop. We are not told whether or no the child survived!

But this was only a preliminary trial of Builth on Lady Hester's part. Corunna, which put the final touch on her aversion to the great world, was fought the following winter. She had, in the meantime, seen Glan Irfon, a farmhouse on the banks of the Irfon, three miles from the town, and had made acquaintance with the good housewife there. Thither she repaired in the Spring following, after that long correspondence as to carpenters, painters, and plasterers, already referred to. She kept a coach in Builth, two saddle-horses and a carriage at Glan Irfon, and reigned a Lady Bountiful among the simple folks of the Wye and Irfon valleys. She distributed cloth and flannel generously, and in return seems only to have asked the privilege of physicking the natives to her heart's content. But the Welsh mountains did not offer adventures sufficient for this enterprising lady, and when she left Builth it was for that wider sphere of Oriental travel, by which she made herself quite famous in her day. I seem to recall a coloured print of her ladyship, clad in the garish garments of the East and lounging at ease in the company of a still more highly-bedizened oriental potentate, both of them blowing clouds of smoke from prodigiously long pipes. Her elaborate letters to Mrs. Price, of Glan Irfon, are interesting, as showing the wants of a great lady a century ago who had determined to rusticate in farmhouse lodgings. It may be worth noting also, as a sign of the times, that she hired as her servant a daughter of the Vicar of Glascombe, a place already alluded to as being so picturesquely buried among the Radnor hills. Her first letter to the reverend gentleman seems to have taken two months in reaching him by post, and given rise to some mild protests on the slowness of the mails.

There is a delightful country, too, for rambling about in at the back of Builth, either up the valleys of the Dihonu or the Irfon, or away up on to the Epynt Hills, over which the road from Builth to Brecon goes wandering through high wilds where sheep and curlews wake the echoes and the tongue of

Ancient Britain holds bravely out, though far outflanked upon either side in the vales below.

There is no better centre in all South Wales for exploring a large extent of that delectable country than Builth, and it is surprising that the hotel speculator has overlooked the fact and failed to provide accommodation of the kind that well-to-do people look for in the holiday season, for Builth road, two miles up the river and the next station, is a most convenient railway centre. The North Western and the Cambrian here cross each other and carry travellers North, East, South, and West. The situation is both delightful and convenient. Encircled by hills and mountains, which to the North fade away into hazy distance, there is yet ample space of meadow, wood, and water, and smooth, varied foreground for sun and breeze to play over. The Wye, too, is just here pent up into a narrow channel, and for near a mile goes thundering down those rapids known and renowned in the salmon fishing world as "Builth rocks."

It always seems to me that somewhere here should, in course of time, arise one of those establishments of which South Wales stands so woefully in need. An ideal summer resort should have attractions in its own situation and outlook for the lounger or the invalid, and yet be so placed that the active and enterprising have plenty of convenient outlets. Half-an-hour by rail, for instance, from Builth Road Station will, in one direction, place you at the foot of the Black Mountains; in another on the slopes of Radnor forest; in a third at Rhayader with its infinite possibilities for exploration; in a fourth amid the splendid solitudes that look down upon the Vale of Towy. Not only a railroad, but a good highway leads to each of these four points of the compass, and this, in every case, through scenes in themselves for the most part exquisitely fair. The cyclist therefore can dispense, if he so chooses, with Cambrian or North-Western, but even he or she will not deny that the knowledge of a friendly railroad, as a help at the be-

ginning or close of a long day, is not a thing to be lightly regarded.

But this ideal resting-place has yet to be created. Builth itself, so far as situation goes, is the nearest thing to it and is a long two miles by road or rail from the junction. To reach the latter we must recross the bridge to the station on the Radnor side and follow the highway along the level strip between the wooded uplands of Wellfield and the river Wye, which soon assumes that stormy character already spoken of as "Builth rocks." I never follow this two miles of road without a certain tightening of the chest in sympathy with certain well-remembered sensations on the first occasion of making its acquaintance. If the reader will pardon the personal note, I think the incident had humour enough in it to justify the few lines required to recall it.

It was a great many years ago and we were a party of three; visitors for the time at Llandrindod, but bound on a day's outing for the good town of Brecon. My companions were a middle-aged country gentleman and his wife from South-West Wales. The former was steeped in every form of Welsh lore, grave and gay, and withal a notable raconteur; indeed it was this quality which in part proved, or so nearly proved, our undoing. As we descended from the high level of the North-Western station to the Cambrian train waiting below, all the marketing world seemed bound on the same errand, and "five a side," regardless of class, appeared inevitable, a disappointing state of things when your main object in a railway journey is to contemplate the scenery. The last carriage on the train however reached just beyond the platform and lay under the railway arch. It was empty and locked, but the Squire produced a railway key and we crept stealthily in lest others perchance should see our good fortune and crowd after us. To guard against such a catastrophe I am afraid we selfishly relocked the door. "There," said our leader as he sat down slapping his thighs with satisfaction, "I call that very neatly done," and he plunged at once

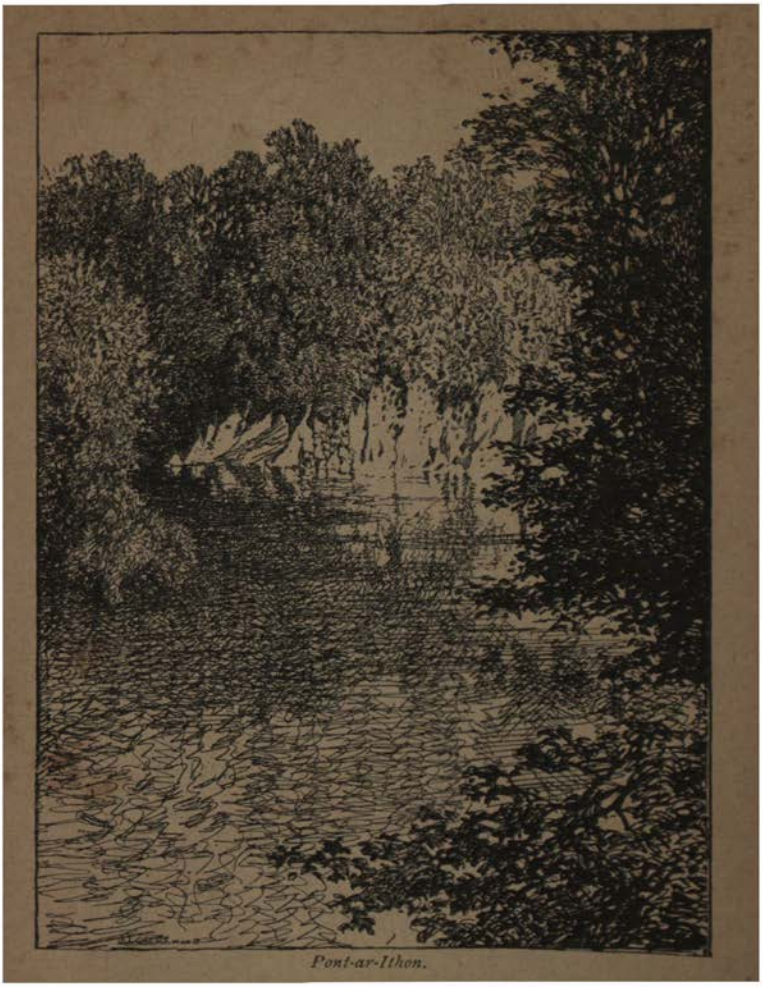
into some entertaining reminiscence that our seeming good luck had suggested. There were not, in short, three happier people in Wales on that fine June morning.

I don't know which of us first realised the deadly silence that brooded under that railway arch when the Squire's tale was ended. But suspicions once aroused it took about three seconds to grasp the situation, which was truly pitiable. The train had gone! The carriage we had secured with such artfulness and presence of mind was not "meant," and was unattached. We fell to beating our breasts, for there was not another train in the day that could help us, and then dropped painfully and ignominiously down on to the permanent way. The only porter and the station master regarded us with ill-concealed amusement and surprise, and the Squire took up his position on the deserted platform and began to curse the Cambrian Railway with a vigour which was unfair. But in those days the Cambrian was grappling with difficulties too great for it, and it was the privilege of everyone who lived or travelled on it to indulge *ad libitum* in satire and abuse of the Welsh line. So the Squire's objurgations arose perhaps from habit rather than logic. Suddenly, however, he cooled down. Something seemed to strike him, and, looking at his watch, he said to me, "Can you run?"

Of course no self-respecting and sound English male under thirty would admit incapacity in this respect, but I said that I doubted if I could run as fast as even a Cambrian Company's train at that depressed period of its history.

"No," said he, "but this train I have just remembered stops at Builth for twenty minutes and sometimes (for certain reasons) longer. If you could catch it they would probably wait for us, and" (the speaker was of generous girth) "we will come along after you as fast as ever we can."

To cut short my tale, I did run for that train and caught it, but those two miles were burnt into my brain for life. Happily, too, it lingered longer than usual, and strained a point beyond



Pont-ar-Ithon.

that again in my companions' favour, and we spent a happy day in Brecon.

The road from Builth Junction to Rhayader follows the Wye

for nearly the whole twelve miles of its length. I shall hurry over it, however, not because it is unworthy of lengthier notice, but, on the contrary, for the very reason that its charms are of similar character and equal quality to those of the route traversed in the last chapter. It may well, indeed, be a matter of dispute which of these two stretches is the finest on the Wye. It matters little, and is not likely ever to be settled, for the two together make one incomparable and undivided whole.

For two or three miles our road bends out into Radnorshire, spans the broad and sparkling streams of the Ithon and, returning to the Wye, runs down to Newbridge with a fine and striking view on the way of the vista of mountains that now enfold us. There is a bridge here, from whose centre every charm that a broad tempestuous river foaming beneath walls of foliage possesses can be enjoyed. On the Western bank the fair woods and park-lands of Llysdinam spread upwards. Away on our right are the broken common-lands of Radnor, rich rather in the traces of prehistoric times, in Roman causeways and British forts, than in the memories of later men and later exploits. No castle building to speak of broke the mediæval solitudes of northern Radnor. Broken men, bandits and outlaws, so far as we may know, for the most part haunted its bosky combes or pricked over its peaty commons. Here the Lords of Melenydd and Buallt (as Builth was then called), the Mortimers and de Braoses, met—on almost neutral ground—the fierce warriors of South Wales. Here the men of Pôwys pushing over the Kerry hills from the Severn's bank, or through the still lonesome gorges of Pantydwr, joined issue with Lord Marchers or Southern Chieftains, according to the humour which for the moment was in vogue. A debatable land, or something like it, was this whole country of the Upper Wye. A castle was thrust out here and there into the tangled wilderness, as a note of defiance for him to hold who could; a centre of strife, a luminous gathering point for each and any who were spoiling for a fight and might perhaps not find each other so

readily, if launched at a venture into the chaos of mountain, forest and moorland.

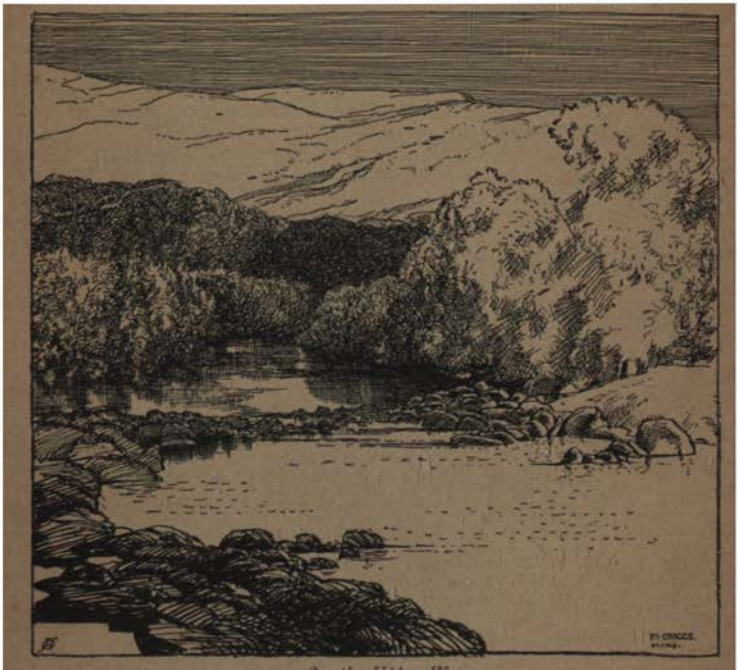
Doleven looms high above us. The woodlands of Doldowlod, in the full splendour of their midsummer foliage, throw deep shadows on our path. Here in a strip of velvety park-land enclosed in overhanging woods, and walled in by mighty hills, a veritable abode of peace, dwelt one of the great disturbers of the world's peace—Watt, of steam-engine fame.

As we draw near Rhayader the valley opens somewhat and the railroad, which has been clinging unobtrusively to the wooded banks of the river, now comes into view. We pass the mouth of the Elan and near it the bowery dwelling of a famous animal and landscape painter, whose pictures of Welsh cattle, grouped amid the Wye's amber streams, have ere now made many a London prisoner wish himself far away.

The proper name of Rhayader is Rhaiadr Gwy, "the falls of the Wye." But in the English-speaking parts of South Wales you never quite know where you are in the matter of spelling, and can form no notion of the pronunciation, since this is more or less Anglicised, though just how much is always a question of local caprice. You are more likely than not to find your best Welsh rendering of double consonants, vowels, and gutturals as hopelessly thrown away as if you addressed an Irish M.P. in that native tongue about which he is so eloquently enthusiastic. In the Welsh-speaking districts, whether north or south, if you have once mastered the alphabet and a few leading rules of accent and inflexion, you can scarcely go far wrong in a place name. But in the Anglo-Welsh regions you have nothing whatever to guide you—though this, it is true, does not so greatly signify where the populace are accustomed to the sound of English as their own tongue.

There is no "Rhaiadr" or Cataract worth mentioning now at this old-fashioned little oasis of a market town. I believe the making of the bridge foundations did away with any distinction it may formerly have had. Nor is there anything

very special in the situation of the place, though a fine circle of wild hills and mountains surround it; a typical Welsh market town of a thousand souls, a couple of streets crossing each other with a few quaint buildings and an air of somniferous insignificance which deceives the Saxon, particularly the Saxon townsman on his Welsh tours. Its modern features



On the Upper Wye.

need not detain us. The surprising number of sheep and cattle that annually change hands in its modest thoroughfares; the profound respectability of its principal inn, the "Lion"; the fair sprinkling of carriage folk that may be seen, in summer time at any rate, calling at the chemist's or the draper's, are facts which will have no particular interest for the stranger.

The castle was, of course, the focus around which the scant life of the neighbourhood, in the days of old, chiefly gathered. Nothing now remains of it but the tump on which it stood perched above the river. Civilisation has, in modern times, garnished the little moorland town with a girdle of woods and enclosures, farms and country seats. But the background, upon all sides, is still wild enough to give some notion of how stern an outlook must have met the warder's eye as he paced the ramparts, in the days of Owen Gwynedd or Rhys ap Griffith. It was that last redoubtable South Welshman, who in his wars against the Sons of Conan, the then lords of Merioneth, erected this frontier fortress in the dark and bloody wilderness of Gwrthreynion, as North-West Radnorshire was then called. The nature of the situation and the manners of the times will be best illustrated by the fact that Rhaiadr, between 1194 and 1224, was successively occupied by the forces of North Wales; by those of Powys; by Rhys ap Griffith's sons against their father; by the father against the sons; by the English army; and lastly, by Llewelyn, who made such bonfire as he was able of the grim walls.

Here, at Rhayader, is a marked parting of the ways. One of them, together with the railroads, speeds onward direct for the Severn Valley and North Wales, passing through the only gap in the mountains, and climbing the desolate and spongy uplands of St. Harmon and Pantydwr. The other, which is the old coaching highway for Aberystwith, swings to the north-west, and, clinging still to the Wye, follows it through wild and woodless mountains to its source upon the quaking solitudes of Plinlimmon. This early stage of the famous river's existence bears small resemblance to the others. It has by now lost the waters of its three chief tributaries and is but a wayward mountain stream. Stately woodlands and country seats are left behind. Meagre growths of mountain ash and alder and stunted oak now mark its course, and that only at intervals amid rolling sheep pastures and breezy moorlands.

Rhayader is the limit I have set myself, but I would advise no one who can do so to omit the run up to Llangurig which is but ten miles up the Wye, to say nothing of the further twenty over the foot of Plinlimmon to the sea, for the whole is beautiful. The road to Llangurig, though narrow and little used, is for so wild a country most admirable. No cyclist of average powers would feel the least inclination to dismount at any period of the stage or to quarrel with any yard of it, though always rising; while the charm of the vast sheepwalks, the constant companionship of the seldom hidden and joyous stream by the roadside, and the strenuous mountain air will make the expedition, I think, quite unforgettable by any who have the good fortune to enjoy it under sunny skies. At Llangurig, too, which is just in Montgomeryshire, and a Welsh-speaking village, there is a really comfortable inn, kept, moreover, by a lady who bears the rare and interesting old Welsh surname of Anwyll.

Radnorshire jumps to the Western side of the Wye, at the mouth of the Elan, below Rhayader, and thrusts a block of territory some ten miles square between the North of Brecon and the South of Montgomeryshire in most superfluous fashion. It is its wildest corner, and contains some of the most beautiful scenery in Wales. How few of its twenty thousand people Radnor can spare for such an outlying solitude may be guessed! Edward the First, when he created the Northern Counties, attached this district of Gwrthreynion, then part of Arwystli, to Merioneth, which seems clumsy. Henry the Eighth, when he completed Wales, as we know it, tacked it on to Radnor, which was worse, for it has about as much in common with Knighton or Presteign, physically and socially, as Cardigan has with Monmouth—except that, curiously enough, only a small corner of even this Western fragment speaks Welsh. Any one who has frequently to describe, in a word or sentence, various districts of Wales, will ardently long for a more common use of the old divisions which were dictated by physical causes and common

sense. Half the Welsh counties sprawl about in a fashion almost useless for history or topography, the reason for this, though no business of ours, being tolerably obvious. Denbigh, Merioneth, Radnor, and Brecon, are most inconsequent stragglers. Carnarvon is much helped by the general use of the term Lleyn for its peninsular. Merioneth would be much simplified if the districts of Ardudwy and Mawddwy, so clearly defined as they are by nature, could be resuscitated for everyday use, which would be easy. At any rate, it is no use hoping to redivide Radnorshire into the old districts of Gwrthreynion, Melenydd, and Elvael, which, so far from savouring of pedantry, would be a real comfort.

All three districts, Giraldus Cambrensis—who has given us more practical, as well as dubious, information about Mediæval Wales than any one, and lived himself at the end of the twelfth century in the very thick, so to speak, of the fun—tells us, were the sporting ground of broilers and supernatural influences "alike conspicuous for the great and enormous excesses which, from ambitious usurpations of territory, have arisen among brothers and relations." It was not only the cockpit of contending factions but a land of mystery and miracle. Scarce a rude church or a gutted castle in this once bloody and debatable land but has its weird tale. At Llancavan a Lord of Builth, wearied with the chase and overtaken by darkness, entered the church with his hounds and spent the night. In the morning his hounds were mad and he was blind. In his remorse for the sacrilegious act he had himself conveyed to Palestine and there led on horseback and fully armed in the front of the fighting line against the Saracens who very promptly despatched him.

When Elineon again, son-in-law of that Prince Rhys who built Rhayader Castle, and himself a crusader, was hunting in the neighbourhood, one of his people shot a hind with big antlers of twelve years' growth upon her head. The horns were sent as a present to Henry the Second, but the uncanny

nature of the beast was only too well proven, as the man who killed it was at once struck blind of one eye and paralysed in his limbs. At St. Harmon—which now boasts a railway station three miles above Rhayader, amid a solitary waste of bog and mountain, strange things happened in Giraldus's time. For in the little church dedicated to Germanus or St. Garmon (hence Harmon) there was preserved a staff of St. Ciengs covered on all sides with silver and gold and shaped in the form of a cross. Sufferers from glandular diseases who approached this sacred symbol in the proper spirit, and presented at the same time a penny, found it an unfailing cure. Even then, however, before the stock business could possibly have been a profitable pursuit in Radnor, there were men with a sharp eye to a deal. One sufferer having prostrated himself before the glittering symbol had the temerity to offer it a halfpenny, whereupon, says Giraldus, only the centre of the sore healed, the outside parts still retaining the inflammation. On the production, however, of the balance due, we are told, the cure was fully perfected. Another graceless person persuaded the oracle to give him credit but, having been cured, failed to pay, whereupon he had a recurrence of his ailment; nor was it till he had paid down thrice the original fee that he was made a whole man again.

Rhayader, so much as there was of it in the 12th century, was the victim of Divine wrath accompanied by a miracle. In ancient days a hand-bell was kept in the Welsh churches, and, before a funeral, was carried to the house of the deceased, being rung there with some ceremony as well as in the subsequent procession to the grave. A poor woman of Glascwm stole this funeral-bell and carried it to Rhayader, hoping to bribe the jailers of the castle to release her husband, who was there confined. The jailers accepted the bell but retained their prisoner, for which combination of sacrilege and knavery the whole town was consumed by fire that very night, except the wall upon which the cause of offence was hung.

The great Birmingham water-works, now in process of construction, are by far the principal object of attraction in the neighbourhood of Rhayader, and this sounds prosaic enough. But let no one be deterred on this account or because they have no taste for engineering enterprises, or may even feel viciously disposed towards the desecration of nature they involve, from visiting this one. The river Elan, as already noticed, meets the Wye a mile or two below the town, if town Rhayader may be called, and, flowing from the West, divides Northern Breconshire from this outlying corner of Radnor. It has been celebrated through all time for the blend of soft beauty and rugged grandeur which distinguishes (we need not yet use the past tense) its tortuous mountain-shadowed course. The former charm of its foregrounds has in part of course disappeared, its romantic seclusion for the time being replaced by chaos. But the hills and crags that fascinated Shelley and inspired his earliest muse, those

> "Jagged peaks that frown sublime
> Mocking the blunted scythe of Time,"

still look down, unscarred, untouched, stern and silent on the affrighted vale beneath.

A mile or two of uneventful road, over whose high hedgerows the hills loom gradually larger, brings us to the bend of the Elan, where its interests past and present begin to assert themselves; first a small railroad, then a new hotel, then a whole village of a temporary description which fills the narrow valley, and finally the chaotic scene of this stupendous enterprise itself with its bustle, roar and stir.

At the first glance, it is evident how admirably adapted is the Elan valley for the purpose it is being put to. For the vale itself is narrow, while at its mouth a natural gateway is formed by the huge craggy shoulder of Craig Cnwch on the Radnor side, and the outstanding front of Craig-y-Foel on the other. Through this imposing gateway, where the main dam is

built, you get fine glimpses of mountains rolling away westward, suggestive of abounding streams and gorges innumerable, where impetuous waters from a hundred aërial springs may be pent up and stored. A knowledge of the Liverpool enterprise, now known as Lake Vyrnwy, both before, during and since its completion, would well qualify any one to be tolerant of the temporary desecration of even this classic vale. But Lake Vyrnwy is a single sheet of water five miles long; there are here to be several lakes, a very large one at this lower end, and other smaller ones further up the diverging valleys of the Elan and Claerwen. Nearly eight millions is, I believe, the sum to be expended, and it will be many years before the work is completed. Those who know Lake Vyrnwy, its peace, its charm, nay, its grandeur, may well let their fancy work on what this will be when the steam-engine, the crane, the pick, spade and hammer are silent, and the busy crowds who work them have melted away, and the unsightly scars they have made are buried for ever. And when miles of deep, clear water, removed from all contact, as they must be, with even rural mankind and his works, roll between wild mountains and craggy cliffs, touched here perhaps with a fringe of woodland, there with a strip of meadow or brake of gorse and fern, we may be permitted the passing thought whether even Buttermere or Derwentwater will be much more fair than this transformed Cwm Elan.

Now, however, at this mouth of the valley, there is wild enough work doing, and the peace and beauty which the future has in store for this much tortured arcadia requires some effort to keep in mind. Locomotives, dragging long lines of loaded trucks, are snorting along what appears to be the face of precipices, and crowds of men are swarming like ants in rugged quarries where not long since black cattle were browsing in luxuriant pastures. The thunder of the blasting shot rolls perpetually from cliff to cliff and dies away among the distant hills, where sheep are still bleating and curlews calling, as if Birmingham has never even cast its eye upon their solitude.

Cwm Elan.

As is always the case in such enterprises, a splendid new road winds its way along the base of the hills, as well as a temporary railway. The first soon lifts us high above the great dam which is to hold back the waters of the lower lake, and is some two hundred yards in length, well over a hundred feet in height, and as many in width at the base. Half a mile beyond it, at Nantgwyllt, the valleys of the Elan and the Claerwen part, each to burrow its way into the wilderness towards Cardiganshire. This lower lake will stretch for three miles and a half up the Elan and two miles up the Claerwen valley. Now I do not want to choke my reader with statistics that merely make the brain of the average mortal who is not a town councillor or director of a water company reel vaguely, but I am told that when the whole thing is completed, and the smaller storage reservoirs higher up the valley are made, sixty million gallons of water a day will be carried through the seventy miles of aqueduct to Birmingham. What perhaps is more to the purpose here, as the scenery of Wales, and not the sanitation of Birmingham, chiefly concerns us, is the fact that two or three feet of compensation water will drop continually over the edge of the big dam now below us and fall in a solid sheet a hundred and odd feet high and over two hundred yards in breadth into the Elan below. In stormy weather it must be confessed that this will make a cataract of some distinction, judged by our standard of waterfalls in Britain—much the biggest I believe in the kingdom.

It is curious to stand up here above the confluence of the two valleys, and amid the hubbub of traffic, and look down on the meadows still so peacefully intact on the upper side of the great dam. Cricket, football, and tennis grounds, laid out for the benefit of the large temporary and exotic population, look almost as incongruous in this remote Welsh valley as the disturbance of its natural features. There, too, at the foot of the hill dividing the two valleys, and awaiting its submersion, still stands, just as it was left, the beautiful seat of Nantgwylt

where the late owners of practically all this territory dwelt peacefully, amid salmon and trout, partridges and grouse. Straight ahead of us the valley of the Claerwen seems to follow a tortuous path into a sea of mountains, dark in shadow or green with sunlight or grey with distance. The new road, however, turns sharp to the north with the Elan valley, and in a short time we are looking upon an entrancing scene in no way touched as yet by pick or spade.

Cwm Elan is the second of the two country houses standing on the estate acquired by the corporation, and like Nantgwyllt is destined to submersion. But it has a much stronger claim than this upon our interest in having been for a time the home of Shelley. Indeed it was the poet's first love in the way of natural scenery, as he came here soon after his abrupt and involuntary departure from Oxford in the summer of 1811. Cwm Elan then belonged to his cousins, the Groves, to whose daughter Harriet, it will be remembered, the young poet, though but a boy, had early engaged himself. The engagement was broken, however, even before this, and indeed it was here that Shelley received the letter from Harriet Westbrook which decided him on his unfortunate elopement with that hapless damsel.

Fascinated, as well he may have been, with the wild charms of the district, Shelley returned here the following Spring with his newly-married wife, on this occasion however, occupying Nantgwyllt for the greater part of the time. Here, embosomed in the solitude of mountains, woods and rivers, "silent, solitary and old," among "ghosts, witches, fairies and hobgoblins" and not yet tired of his young wife, the ardent boy poet was supremely happy. He had been by no means so cheerful the previous year at Cwm Elan with the two-fold trouble of expulsion from Oxford and a broken engagement weighing on his mind. He was also wrestling with the perhaps more harassing problem of his coming escapade, but after all such commonplace mishaps do not quite express the measure of the

workings of a brain like Shelley's. He describes himself at any rate as having been the victim of excruciating mental torment in lines which Dr. Dowden gave to the world for the first time not many years ago.

> "The moonlight was my dearer day,
> Then would I wander far away,
> And, lingering on the wild brook's shore
> To hear its unremitting roar,
> Would lose in the ideal flow
> All sense of overwhelming woe.
> Or at the noiseless noon of night
> Would climb some heathy mountain's height,
> And listen to the mystic sound
> That stole in fitful gusts around."

Back again however with Harriet Westbrook as his bride, his mood was very different, and so also appeared

> "That same scene when peaceful love
> Flings rapture's colour o'er the grove."

Here Shelley had no neighbours but his own cousins to fall foul of, with his startling and subversive views, as was the case a little later during his sojourn in Snowdonia. Want of means was the immediate cause of his abandoning Nant-gwyllt, for though he seemed to rejoice in the notion of its being haunted, he had no such weird midnight adventures there as the one that drove him from Tremadoc. He then tried the lower reaches of the Wye, taking a house near Chepstow, but, like some other people who are intimate with the upper portion of the river, the better known lower ones seemed to him comparatively "tame and uninteresting."

That Shelley had his gay moments at Cwm Elan, however, is evident from the testimony of an old woman still alive in 1878, who remembered the poet as an eccentric but winsome looking lad who used to amuse himself by descending the rushing torrent of the Elan on a plank, and on one occasion, at any rate, she could recollect him sharing his narrow bark with a protesting cat.

What measure of future inspiration Shelley's fervid fancy drew from such long sojourning in these delightful solitudes, we may leave his biographers to determine. If they did not form the background for many of the splendid thoughts and flights of genius that illumined his short life and delighted future generations, it would be strange indeed.

But all this time, Cwm Elan itself is beneath us. A plain four-storied house with lofty wings, nestling at the foot of an almost perpendicular hill, thickly clad to its summit with pines and hemlocks and oaks. Strips of smooth meadow-land lie between the gardens and the Elan, which courses between woody banks down the narrow vale. Up the latter, which soon narrows almost to a gorge, though it winds on yet for many miles, the mountains draw together in stern and striking fashion; rocky, barren, and precipitous, and leaving but a riband of meadows between their feet for the stream to play over. Significant-looking white stones, at long but regular intervals, far up the hill sides, tell a tale of the coming deluge, and remind one that not only Cwm Elan and Nantgwyllt, but the scanty homesteads with their protecting groves, and the humbler cottage with its mossy roof that here and there have taken firm root in the deep valley, are all to be the abodes of slimy eels and the lair of monster trout.

It will be a long business yet, however, and it is quite certain that the narrow meadows by the Elan and the Claerwen will yield more than one hay crop, and the oaks and the rowans and the alders will put forth their leaves again, and yet perhaps again before the word is given for the great waters to rise and swallow them up. And when that is all completed, and the mountains of Cwm Dauddwr and of Drygan and Pen-y-Gorllwyn look down upon these miles of lakes and share their ancient solitudes with the silence of unmolested waters, may you and I, dear reader, be alive to come here again and behold a spectacle upon whose possibilities I dare not venture to enlarge.

As the valleys of the Claerwen and the Elan are each a cul-de-sac for anything short of what the old guide books call the hardy pedestrian, we must retrace our steps, and as there is no reason to linger further in Rhayader, there is nothing for it but to run down the Wye, again to Builth, a performance however, at which no person of taste would surely grumble, since a notable valley is always worth seeing, from both points of view. But not on paper, so I shall seize the occasion to say a word or two about the mountain wilderness from which we have been driven back by lack of facilities for crossing it.

To give these same remarks more lucidity, I am going to strain my reader's patience by asking him to glance at the nearest map of Wales, or of one containing Wales, that lies to hand. If upon this he will follow the Cambrian railroad east from Aberystwith, to Moat Lane Junction, and thence southward to Builth Road, and there, taking the North-Western into the Vale of Towy, cross the country to Lampeter on Teify, and away up again through Cardiganshire by the Manchester and Milford Railway to Aberystwith, he will have completed the four sides of a ragged-edged parallelogram. Within this large area the observant person will see at once that there are no railroads, and, on a closer inspection, discover that there are scarcely any roads except those about and around its fringes and I incline to the belief that the average mortal, who got thus far would begin to think that his previous notions of South Wales required readjustment.

Now the territory encompassed by these three lines of railroad consists by rough measurement of about 800 square miles. Allowing for a more or less narrow strip of civilisation, around its borders, this great block of country may for general purposes be described as a mountain wilderness, whose character may be guessed at from the peep we had of it at Cwm Elan. The extreme northern portion of this oblong block being occupied by the solitudes of the Plinlimmon range, and available from Aberystwith, is not unfamiliar to the

English tourist. But the bulk of it, the whole portion in fact south of the Aberystwith, Llangurig and Rhayader road recently noticed, and indeed the only regular road leading through it, is not merely an unknown land to the Saxon and the stranger, but a region of whose very existence he is not generally aware. An occasional traveller to be sure gets to the ruins of Strata Florida Abbey in Cardiganshire, and touches the further edge of it. Many more perhaps are attracted to Cwm Elan by the commotion that Birmingham has made there. Since Llandrindod, again, has extended its connection across the border, the alien promenading its high perched walks between his pump-room engagements gazes vaguely at the shadowy mountain ridges beyond the Wye, which far away roll towards the setting sun. But neither he, nor anybody else to speak of, ever really penetrates these noble solitudes. Dartmoor and Exmoor charm, as well they may do, the Briton who has the good taste to wander for preference in his own country, the most beautiful upon earth. How much more would these far-stretching and mysterious highlands of South Wales delight him! One of the tritest of commonplaces is that no portion of Great Britain, within reasonable access, offers any refuge in holiday seasons for those who are temporarily sick of their fellow creatures and ask at the same time for Nature's best. I will undertake to say that between the sources of the Elan, here above us, and the Vale of Towy, a proposing hermit might bury himself more effectively, and see less of his fellow creatures, than in any part of these islands that it is my privilege to know. And here too, the person who yearns after such experience might even forget his own language. At any rate his emotions should be further stimulated by finding the scant companions of his solitude possessed of a strange and ancient tongue and having little or no speech beside.

Seriously, though, there is here an unbroken stretch of mountain and moorland such as even North Wales can nowhere quite show the like of in extent, and where North Wales

approaches it in sustained loneliness, highways of more or less excellence, and in summer a good deal used detract from the aloofness. But no roads to speak of, save the single one alluded to, penetrate this South Wales wilderness. It can be adventured only on foot or horseback. I have never myself seen or heard of any strangers from outside Wales engaging in such an enterprise. Here too again one has cause to deplore the lack of definition in modern geography. Nothing is more clearly marked and compact than this mountain region. It is over forty miles in length and fifteen or twenty wide, and has profoundly influenced Welsh history and ethnology since time began and yet, except in its northern extremity, there is absolutely no name by which one can briefly allude to it. The long crescent-shaped county of Cardigan, facing the sea, is virtually cut off from the world by these same mountains, which form most of its curving back; but you cannot call them the Cardigan mountains, since Carmarthen, Brecon, Radnor and Montgomery all thrust themselves into their vitals. Nowhere surely do county lines wander so inconsequently and so far over bogs, crags and torrents. Here the infant Towy thunders in flood-time through scenes of unsuspected and surpassing wildness. Here for miles and miles the Irfon plashes downward amid fern and crag, the sole disturber of surrounding solitudes. Here too the Teify, issuing from cold mountain tarns, starts on its sharp descent to the brown bogs of Tragaron. Nay, the Wye itself, the Severn and Ystwith, all hail Plinlimmon as their fountain head, though this latter region, to be sure, and this fact, is a matter of more common knowledge.

To enumerate the streams however that find their source in these highlands would provide sufficient matter for another *Poliolbion* and a second Drayton, and that style of composition would not, I fear, in these days find many readers. But, as I have said, it is monstrous that these hundreds of square miles of outstanding and obstructive and enchanting mountain solitude should lack a comprehensive name, and, still more wonderful,

that they should be unknown. In ordinary conversation it is sufficiently inconvenient, but when for half a book you are more or less in their presence, it becomes a serious nuisance. The ancients were much more sensible, as we have already noticed, and the ancients used to call them the Ellineth Mountains. Even the unwelcome Norman and English visitors of that time could not get along, according to Giraldus, without some designation for a range that so vitally influenced their outrageous proceedings, and, flinching doubtless from the Welsh name, which is somewhat Anglicised here, called them "The Moruge." What this might mean, since there is no local clue to a solution, the Anglo-Normans of that day alone could tell us. Antiquaries and etymologists are evidently themselves distrustful of the theories they feel bound to advance. I do not see, however, why we should not revive the old Welsh term for use in this book, if the necessity arises; at any rate, there will be admirable authority for it in no less a person than Giraldus himself, so if I drop into it for sheer want of a better the reader will not, I hope, call me pedant.

And all this time, though we have been in the Wye basin, if not actually in the Wye valley, ever since we crossed the Welsh border, not a word has been said of any practical moment regarding fish or fishing. I have alluded, it is true, and perhaps at sufficient length, to the deplorable scarcity of salmon in waters that were once famous for them. But this is a complex subject, and moreover does not much concern potential visitors, but chiefly riparian owners and lessees. Trout however have a much wider interest, and I wish I could be cheerful on that more popular topic. The Wye itself, from Boughrood upwards at any rate, was once a fine trouting river but its most ardent votaries could no longer call it so. The pike which slip in from Llangorse lake are an old story, though they must be responsible for much havoc, and they have not been waged war upon as persistently, I believe, as in former times. Then again the chub, whose presence is an outrage in so noble a river,

have lamentably increased to the displacement of a proportionate number of trout. There are occasional days early in the season when a fisherman may yet, I am told, catch Wye trout upon the hot rise and fill his basket. But I am quite sure the wandering angler would be ill-advised to settle down upon the Wye between Rhayader and Boughrood, even if he secured the necessary leave, with a view to catching trout. It should be said however that they will sometimes run well at a minnow.

There are many beautiful tributaries, ideal and once prolific trout streams. All of them have declined sadly in quality within more or less recent times, a deterioration aggravated no doubt by the unparalleled run of dry seasons we have had of late. The little Edw enjoyed a great reputation, but the ruffian with his lime sack has been there with results that I can personally testify to. The Ithon, enchanting river as it is, has had a poor reputation, below Pen y bont at any rate, for many a long year, and swarms with chub. The Irfon is a still more ideal stream, rolling down real dark mountain water over a rocky bed, through miles of woodland. Here I can myself compare the "then and now," and a melancholy retrospect it is. In this case, however, the poacher has probably been kept as severely at arm's length as a Welsh fish poacher can be, and particularly a Wye valley poacher, who is as determined an exponent in the art of illegitimate fish destruction as even Wales can show.

A chub may be an acceptable quarry on the Thames or the Bedford Ouse. But when amber waters are sparkling over your feet and the boughs of birch and mountain ash are waving over your head and heathery mountain filling the sky, he is painfully out of place. It is heartbreaking in such a spot, with memories of other days behind you, to strike your hook again and again into the ugly mouths of these lubberly invaders, and this too in the very eddies and ripples where the trout used to come eagerly, and should be coming now. It is sad to think too that even in these tributary streams that water wolf, the pike,

is extending his miserable ravages. Perhaps a few wet seasons, however regrettable otherwise, will mitigate the depression which rests upon both the salmon and trout interests in the Wye Valley, while facilities for re-stocking depleted streams are now so great that some help may be looked for in that direction. In the meantime I can conscientiously recommend Builth as an admirable centre for the chub fisherman, who may there pursue his art amid conditions of water and landscape that are considered the exclusive privilege of the salmon and trout fisher. Whether the chub that grows so lusty in the crystal pools of the Wye, the Ithon and the Irfon does credit on the table to his "raising," I do not know, or whether he is as uneatable as his English relative. With the ignorance of extreme youth and the egotism of a very juvenile captor, I once pressed on to the plate of an indulgent elderly friend a liberal portion of a Thames chub. The victim worked good-naturedly through his allotted task, though as a matter of fact with some reputation in the world for dry humour and quite innocent in all sporting matters, I am not sure but he may have been considering the verdict he should pronounce on his experiment. "I have never," he said at last, laying his fork down, "eaten a fish like this before; the only thing I can imagine it at all likely to resemble is a boiled scrubbing-brush."

CHAPTER IV

AFTER leaving the cheery bustle which accompanies the short stoppage at Builth junction, the North-Western train from Craven Arms, leaping both the Cambrian railroad and the river Wye, pursues its even way along the beauteous vale of Irfon, climbs the wild watershed beyond it, and drops into the Vale of Towy in the precipitous and striking fashion we shall have cause to notice later. I am by no means sure that the railway passenger has not the better of us here in the matter of outlook. It has been my lot to travel many a summer morning over this short hour's rail between Builth and Llandovery, and I never found that the daily paper purchased so eagerly at the beginning of the journey was much more than unfolded till we were well down in the levels of the Vale of Towy.

But we, for our part, must take the road, and not wholly with unmixed delight, since it is one of the very worst in Wales for a highway that is the sole link between quite a number of important places. To get on to it we must return to Builth town again, cross the Wye and soon afterwards the Irfon near its confluence, skirt the wells where water-drinking miners in their funereal Sunday best are rejoicing in the sunlight and the upper air, and away over two miles of cultivated upland to where the parting of the ways is marked by the trifling but historic hamlet of Cefn y bedd Llewelyn.

Whether the last native ruler in Wales was actually buried here or not, he was certainly killed in the dingle that, just beyond the village, runs sharply down into the deep trough of the Irfon. An old cottage by the roadside is supposed to mark the spot in which his headless trunk was laid; but another tradition says it was carried away either then or afterwards and buried at the Abbey of Cwmhir. The skirmish took place on this north bank of the Irfon. Llewelyn, having secured the bridge at Llanynis, seems to have considered himself safe for the time, since the river was swollen with winter rains. But Sir Elis Walwyn, the English leader, so runs the story, found a ford, and, slipping round behind Llewelyn and his small force, dispersed the last and slew the first, as has been related in another place. A further tradition affirms that while Llewelyn was lying mortally wounded in the dingle, before Adam de Frankton returned to cut his head off, a worthy Cistercian friar, attracted by the sound of strife, arrived in time to administer the last rites of the Church to the wounded prince, who, it may be remembered, was lying under one of those sentences of excommunication with which English prelates helped the English kings to make war upon their domestic enemies.

Up to this point the stranger might cherish a vain hope that the Builth and Llandovery road had been maligned, a premature impression which would be soon rudely dissipated by a struggle of something like three miles over steep and stony pitches before we run down into the hamlet of Garth. Here on the left hand the clear brown waters of the Irfon come breaking out of a long maze of overarching woods, the full measure of whose hidden beauties only the angler in midstream may truly gauge. A bridge swings high over the broad current and carries a road that, running straight across the valley, may be seen toiling up the steep slopes of the Epynt hills on its long route to Brecon. Away on the right is Garth House itself, standing beneath wooded hills with the Dulas twisting

through parklands and pastures towards the Irfon valley; an ancient seat of an ancient stock, the Gwynnes, who for generations were a power in this once wild country, though Fuller Maitlands have lived here now this long time. Here, too, Charles Wesley was united to a lady of the Gwynne family, and drew a better card in the marriage lottery than his more distinguished brother, who, it will be remembered, made a sad mess of it. A mile or two more, and we are at Llangammarch, a delectable little watering-place lying pleasantly in scattered fashion amid woods and fields, the Epynt hills sweeping their bold curves a thousand feet above it and the Irfon plashing cheerily before its doorsteps. A healing spring containing barium chloride to an extent only equalled, I believe, at Kreuznach, is responsible for such measure of importance and prosperity that Llangammarch now enjoys. A new hotel set in a park beyond the river looks inviting, and in a country where good accommodation is at present scarce, may be taken note of for other purposes than water-drinking. In the scattered village with its white houses the ordinary life of an inland Welsh watering-place, though on a smaller scale than some others, pursues the even tenor of its summer season.

Llangammarch's fame, however, does not rest wholly on its infallible spring, but derives something from much older memories dear to the hearts of Welshmen. John Penry, for one, an energetic philanthropist and single-minded evangelist of the Puritan school, was a native. He inveighed against the neglect and ignorance to which the Welsh peasantry were abandoned, and suffered death near London, mainly for his share, real or supposed, in the Mar-Prelate tracts which, among other things, denied the supremacy of the Queen in matters ecclesiastical. Dr. Howell, too, a Bishop of Bristol, and ardent loyalist in Charles I.'s time, hailed from here. Better known, perhaps, even than these, the Rev. Theophilus Evans, a quite distinguished literary character, was vicar of the parish for a quarter of the eighteenth century, while scarcely less

celebrated among Welshman is his grandson, Theophilus Jones, the historian of Breconshire, who was both born and buried here. Indeed, it would be impossible for a person of inquiring mind to be twenty-four hours in the county without, directly or indirectly, invoking the shade of the younger Theophilus, who died nearly a hundred years ago. The local chronicler, who puts half a life's work into a volume that it takes a strong man to carry, does not often reap his reward in this world. Neither the general public nor the circulating libraries care a button about him, nor do the picture magazines expose his lack of physical distinction, or the imperfections of his tailor, or tell us whether he is fond of marmalade or has an affection for poodles, nor does great financial compensation accrue to such monumental tomes. But he has his reward after all, for immortality is almost assured to him. It is tolerably certain that Theophilus Jones will be a household word in South Wales long after Mr. Hall Caine or Marie Corelli and their successors yet unborn have passed out of mind.

But neither the younger Theophilus nor the older Theophilus, the presence of whose dust in the churchyard of Llangammarch has detained us, will have much interest for the passing stranger, though future generations of Breconians will, I am sure, continue to hold the memory of both in reverence. So let us away towards Llanwrtyd, at the best pace a bad and a quite superfluously hilly road admits of. As the valley rises its luxuriance declines. Screens of oak and ash leaves no longer hide the Irfon from our sight, but it sweeps in wide curves, between ruddy banks, and gleams amid spreading pastures where plovers cry and lithe-looking black cattle, cooling their legs in the shallows, give significance to the fact that we are getting into a colder and bleaker country. The small fields of oats and barley look pale and patchy on the hill side, and have not yet begun to think of heading. The clover is yet blooming in the valley, and the corncrake grinds out his harsh notes in

the security of meadow grasses, scarcely touched as yet with the browns and purples of their ripening period. The foothills of the Epynt are shedding their drapery of woods, and between the river and the high sheepwalks, on the southern skyline, the snug homesteads of the Welsh farmers, white and pink, grey and yellow, are freely sprinkled over the rolling ridge lands.

I have in other places, and with some hardihood, declared my partiality for whitewash in rural landscape. A farmhouse of the same sombre colouring as the crags above or beyond it does not seem to me to be of necessity the perfection of a blend. Some note of brightness should surely mark the presence of humanity, whether on wild moors or among woods and fields. Nor on the Welsh homestead, for the most part, is there so much extent of bare wall as to make white too aggressive. They are small and homely fabrics, long of body generally and of low pitch, and carrying withal a generous expanse of roof, which is often contrived of that picturesque, small slate stone or stone tile so much in use in former days. For my part, I maintain that white walls of such a kind as this, gleaming through the boughs of a surrounding orchard, or beneath an overhanging canopy of beech and ash leaves, do not leave much to be desired in the way of artistic harmony. In South Wales, too, wash of various colours is freely used, more particularly on the one-storied houses, whether farm or cottage, saffron and pink being the prevailing alternatives to plain white, though both blue and black are used for picking out the edges of windows or doors. This style of decoration we all know, if applied to a suburban villa, would, very justly, scandalise the neighbourhood, and tend to reduce the rents of adjoining houses. Precisely why an opposite effect is produced when the brush is used with simple freedom on the walls of a country cottage in a leafy lane or in a mountain valley, who can say? But I think there can be no doubt of the fact that Wales, particularly South-West Wales, enjoys to the full such measure of advantage as these patches of bright colour confer on landscape.

We are passing just here over one of those capricious boundaries which mark the present division between the two languages. The Wye itself was for a long time the recognised barrier, but in the last half-century Welsh has been slowly driven up the Irfon valley, to Llangammarch or beyond. Precision in this respect is impossible, for there is always a bilingual strip on either, and particularly the Welsh, side. Moreover, in mountain regions, Welsh clings to the hills long after it has given way in the valleys, where railroads run and villages cluster. Middle-aged men at Garth, for instance, will tell you that thirty years has changed the language of that district. We are, even now, but three or four miles from it, and, nevertheless, are in a wholly Welsh-speaking country.

A characteristic of country life in English-speaking Wales is the almost entire absence of dialect. The countryman whose natural tongue is English, as before remarked, has very little to distinguish his speech but the Welsh intonation. The Welshman who has learnt it as a foreign language speaks it, so far as he happens to go, with grammatical accuracy, and every syllable distinctly sounded as in his natural tongue, and with the marked inflections that belong to the latter. His conversation could only be reproduced on paper with the aid of a musical score, a lame enough method at the best. There are inflections too and forms of emphasis almost universal, particularly among bilingual Welshmen, that could not be written at all, but are full of flavour. The Welshman of the stage and storybook prefaces nearly every sentence with "Indeed to goodness." I can only suppose this time-honoured idiom must have gone out of fashion in the last twenty years. I have already spoken of some trifling flowers of speech that the Radnor rustics indulge in, but as regards South Wales generally there can be no doubt that "Dear me!" is the characteristic national expression wherever a man or woman can speak a few words of English. So simple and natural an ejaculation might seem a foolish thing to waste words over. But the occasional

"Dear me!" of the Saxon bears no relation whatever to the "Dear me!" of Wales. From peer to peasant it is the catch-word of the country, and may be fairly said in some classes to punctuate conversation as does the Northern "aye." A wealth of meaning or an absolute dearth of it is thrown by the voice into these two commonplace monosyllables, and there are at least a score of different methods of enunciation, from the "d'me," repeated at frequent and regular intervals by the listening party in a duologue to show that he is attentive, to the full, prolonged and sympathetic rendering of the phrase by the local preacher when Mrs. Jones tells him that her goodman is down with another bout of rheumatics.

A distinguished ecclesiastic, not very long dead, used to lean greatly upon it when he was deeply moved and threw quite a militant tone into the two harmless little words. This great and good man was afflicted moreover with a slight stutter when heated in discussion. And I have been told that when engaged in presiding over committee meetings, strangers, ignorant of the trifling idiosyncrasy, have been thrown into a cold sweat by the prolonged and fervent rumbling of the preliminary D, and filled with consternation as to what was coming next.

"Yes sure" is, of course, very common among the plainer folk, and the doubling of small words, to wit, "yes yes," "well well," seems always a great comfort to the Anglo-Welsh tongue. In a railway carriage too, you may not infrequently hear a long and animated conversation in Welsh finish up at the station which parts the acquaintances with a "dear me, well well! yes yes! good-bye." These flowers of speech, if I may so call them, to which the Welsh are addicted, sometimes take on quaint forms. Another divine, much less illustrious than the other one, but well known in his lifetime, and well beloved through a considerable slice of the Principality, had a wonderful formula which was the delight of his friends and acquaintances, among whom I was privileged to count myself. He was a large-hearted, simple-minded person of cheerful countenance, comfortable

girth and breezy manner, and greeted almost every interchange of news upon the street with a "Bravo! Bravo! Well done, well done!" This figure of speech so gained upon him with advancing years and gathering dignities that his friends grew quite accustomed to finding the announcement of a blank day on the river or the loss of a cow received in such unsympathetic and inconsequent fashion. So much did not greatly signify, but the words were sometimes known to slip out before the dear old man could stop them in the face of far more serious misfortunes and bereavements, when abruptly announced. Perhaps, however, the principals minded it nothing, while the town laughed.

Where the Irfon, leaving both road and rail to pursue their direct and desolate way towards the Towy watershed, bends to the north-west and dives into the Ellenith Mountains, stands the now large village of Llanwrtyd Wells. This, as a recognised Bethesda, boasts as long a history as Llandrindod, both of them dating far back into the eighteenth century. In the matter of popularity and fashion, it is the potential rival of the greater Wells, but has, as yet, scarcely emerged from the humbler status of an old-fashioned Welsh spa. Llandrindod stands on a high plateau. Llanwrtyd is of equal altitude, some 800 feet, though it lies at the foot of mountains over which you might travel for nearly fifty miles, to the borders of North Wales, without meeting a human being to speak of. It enjoys, moreover, the advantage of a railway station, and is but a short two hours from Shrewsbury and six from London, though very few London people, to be sure, have as yet discovered its existence. This is the more remarkable for two reasons. First, because its wild charm of the situation and environment is probably unsurpassed by that of any inland watering-place in England or Wales, and, secondly, because its sulphur spring is one of the best in Europe, and, in Great Britain, is only equalled by the famous well at Harrogate. There is a flavour of romance, too, about its early history, which is perhaps worth relating.

In the year 1732, when Llanwrtyd consisted of a diminutive stone church, a long way up the valley from the spot on which stands the prosperous village that now bears its name, and the sparse peasantry of its then much wilder neighbourhood were sunk in the fogs of contented ignorance which covered the Wales of that day, the Ffynnon drellwyd, or, the "stinking spring," near the banks of the Irfon, had some local reputation. It was a purely evil one, however, for the well was accounted poisonous or worse, and the passing rustic gave its noisome banks a wide berth.

Now it so happened that one of our Llangammarch worthies, no less a person than the elder Theophilus before-mentioned, who was vicar of the parish at that time, was sore afflicted with an apparently ineradicable scurvy. Indeed, his own account of it, contributed by himself to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, reads like the most gruesome paragraph in a testimonial to an American patent medicine. His very despair of recovery, however, brought him an inspiration, and he made his way one auspicious morning up the tangled banks of the Irfon to where this fearsome well the country folks had told him of exhaled its noisome vapours. The odour of it, he says, guided his steps to its banks, and there he sat down, not quite certain even yet why he had come and what he was going to do. And, even as he gazed, in vague and halting fashion, into the uncanny pool, whose sulphurous waters the peasants were convinced came straight from doubtful regions, the afflicted parson beheld a frog hop from the bank, with an air of entire confidence, into the very middle of the well. And as the Reverend Theophilus narrowly observed the expression and actions of the little animal, he came to the conclusion that, far from having made a mistake, or played a practical joke upon itself, it was enjoying its bath with the air of a person who had come there for that very purpose. This decided Mr. Evans's half-formed resolution, and he applied, though not without caution, the waters of the Ffynnon drellwyd both internally and externally

to his own person. To shorten a familiar story, the Vicar of Llangammarch achieved by these means, in a few weeks, a complete cure, and lived to write many books and become great among Welshmen. In the meantime, he was not likely to withhold his experience from fellow sufferers; the reputation of the sulphur well was made, and, in a desultory way, patients of all degrees resorted to its fountains with marked success, our former acquaintance, Lady Hester Stanhope, among them.

But it was not till towards the middle of the last century that the well was enclosed or any regular accommodation afforded to patients. Since then, the village of Llanwrtyd, near the station, has sprung up, occupying both banks of the Irfon, with a bridge across the river in the centre. The famous spring, however, is half-a-mile up the stream, enclosed in charming grounds, where a good hotel provides for the needs of those who want something more luxurious than the simple village quarters of a Welsh spa. Changes, however, in this latter respect may be fairly looked for before long. In seems quite unlikely that a spot so wholly charming in its situation, so bracing in its air, and possessed of so valuable a water, will long remain unknown to the world beyond the Welsh border.

The Ffynnon drellwyd of Theophilus Evans is now enclosed within a fine pumphouse. Through a thick plate-glass cover you may watch the gaseous waters bubbling from the ground below in much greater volume than even the hundreds of Welshmen and women who through the summer months crowd daily round the pumphouse counters could possibly consume. I believe it is accounted by experts a great advantage to drink your sulphur water with the gas in it as it comes bubbling fresh from the ground. I am told also by people who have some inside knowledge of Continental spas that the difference in many of them between the amount of water consumed or used above ground by patients, and that which actually comes out of the earth in twenty-four hours, is so much upon the wrong side that the measures taken to secure secrecy would throw the

terrors of freemasonry into the shade, and would be astonishing reading for the frequenters of many notable haunts. Thousands of Welsh folk, however, in the last half century have had good cause to bless the sulphur spring of Llanwrtyd. Cure or no cure, a more pleasant spot to woo health in than these green glades, through which the Irfon—pure from its mountain springs—plays joyous music amid bowers of leaves, would be hard to picture.

For we are here in one of the southern gateways to that vast mountain system I have ventured to call by the archaic name of Ellenith. Above the luxuriant woods which wall in the narrow parklands of Llanwrtyd, bold hills rise sharply up to the normal altitude of something like 2000 feet, which sufficiently indicates the scale on which nature has cast the whole of this far-reaching and delightful wilderness. You may walk out of the door of the Dolecoed Hotel and, if your limbs and lungs are sound, be standing in half-an hour on a rocky perch overlooking half South Wales. Northward as far as the eye can see, and twice as far again, is silence and solitude. To the southward you can trace every bend of the Irfon, through its wooded valley, from the silvery thread at your feet to the far away gorges of the Wye that we have so recently left behind us. Beyond the Irfon valley is the long rolling ridge of the Epynt, over whose wild plateaus you may see from here the sharp and shadowy peaks of the Brecon beacons of Corn-ddu, Cribbyn and Penyfan springing high above the Vale of Usk. Westward, again, opposing hills, not much lower than the one we stand on, wood below and wild above, shut out the distance and climb the sky with rugged outline, while to the southward of their shoulders, and over the many-coloured boglands up which a train is crawling to the Towy watershed, we can see the expiring efforts of the Black Mountains, as with a final leap of some 2,600 feet to the pointed pinnacles of the Vans they droop to the broken lowlands of Carmarthen.

For any stranger who might have a fancy for seeing the

Welsh people in their hours of ease, no better stage could be selected than the shady walks which converge on the pump-room at Llanwrtyd. Five or six times a day, before and after every meal, the long procession of patients and holiday-makers traverses the half mile of road which connects the village and the Dolecoed grounds where they mostly disport themselves. All ages and almost all classes are represented in the motley concourse that, increasing with each July day, keeps up such a regular promenade. Half of them, perhaps, are chattering Welsh and all of them, save a few cripples, are as garrulous and as happy as they ought to be when the cares of farm and mine, of pulpit, shop and office are cast aside. Here is a Baptist preacher waving his croquet mallet at his fellow players with much of that authority which the pulpit has made a second nature, and oblivious for the time of local politics or the disestablishment of the Church. There is a country parson from North Wales bursting with information on Church statistics and interested in the price of sheep. Here again is a group of young men singing part songs as they stroll along with as much nonchalance and accuracy as if they had imbibed the art with their mothers' milk; there a bench full of Cardiganshire farmers talking chapels and crops, any one of whom would be painfully disconcerted if called upon at a moment's notice for a complete sentence of English. The Mothers of Wales are here too of course with their knitting, those capacious, determined looking matrons I have so often alluded to with unstinted admiration. What a fine holiday it must be for them too, chickens and milkcows, calves and pigs, wash tubs and sewing machines, all abandoned for a whole blessed fortnight, or even for a month. No woman in the world must surely enjoy a change quite so thoroughly as a working farmer's wife! There are some rare old gossips too among the older men folk, if you can find them out, and this is not difficult, for patriarchs with reputations as *raconteurs* do not hide them under bushels, and you may listen to Welsh stories of a humorous rather than a

folklore kind by the mile, if you are in the mood and have the time. Here too, as at Llandrindod and elsewhere, you will find the seasoned individual who takes no count whatever of the limits set both by science and good sense to the daily measure of consumption, but applies himself to the Ffynnon drellwyd as if his only object were to test the capacity of the human frame in the interests of a heavy wager. "They pay by the day, you see," the hardworked cup-bearer will tell you laconically, "and like to get their money's worth." I am bound to say, however, that having in view the high analysis and the well merited reputation of the sulphur water of Llanwrtyd, the flavour of it is singularly inoffensive. Enthusiasts become by degrees dipsomaniacs in this particular, and will frankly admit their slavery. That sound and healthy people may be seen hurrying off to get their tumbler when the clock strikes the appointed hour with all the ardour of a sailor to his grog allowance is a fact beyond dispute, though a very strange one. "Oh, you'll get to like it soon, ma'am," is the cheery formula of the attendant as some fastidious lady with gouty tendencies makes unbecoming faces over her first dose. "No, never," says the fair one with the severity that such ridiculous impertinence would seem to deserve. Yet it is even possible that in a fortnight the unwilling drinker will complain of being restricted to six tumblers *per diem*, so insidious is this cool and sparkling liquid.

And sometimes too in the summer evenings, Tom Roberts will bring his harp over from Builth, and set it up beneath a tree outside the pumproom. Then the people—peasants, tradesmen and gentles—gather round, and beneath the shadow of its hoary hills, the harpist will strike up one or other of the ancient airs of Wales, the Irfon filling in the pauses with its ceaseless music on the rocks below. And as the sun goes down, if not before, there is dancing for those young men and maidens who are careless of the preacher's frown, or belong to the old Mother Church, who is stronger in South

than in North Wales, and has no frown at all for such innocent diversion. But by ten o'clock all is silent. The old men have toddled away down the valley to the village, their last glass emptied, their last pipe smoked, their last yarn finished. The young folks have followed them, singing glees and part songs after the manner of their kind in Wales. The rustic park is closed and deserted, the rabbits sneak down from the fern-clad slopes above to crop the dewy luscious grass, and owls hoot in the wood. The hills loom up black and solemn towards the starry sky and the tumbling river, now all other sounds are mute, fills the whole valley with its insistent note, which seems in the darkness somehow more suggestive of the mysterious solitudes from which it has so lately come.

Not a very aristocratic resort, will, I am afraid, be the verdict of the gentler reader, and there would be no gainsaying its correctness. But in taking this passing glance at a typical Welsh spa, and the plain folk who for the good of their minds and bodies chiefly forgather there, it would be misleading to suppose that people of a more exacting kind are not to be found enjoying themselves quite as much. Indeed, as good quarters for tourists are so scarce in South Wales, it is important to note the fact that the Dolecoed Hotel standing in the grounds exists exclusively for the benefit of the minority alluded to, and is a comfortable first-class house. Nor, while on the subject of quarters, would it be fair to leave an impression on the reader's mind that the village is wholly democratic in this respect. Accommodation of the requisite kind is secured there by knowing people and, as I have before remarked, a change in these particulars seems imminent. I can only believe that if the British public knew what a country was here, six hours from London and three from Liverpool, it is probable that a transformation would take place sufficient to rouse such ire among old *habitués* as has raged around the new brick squares and terraces of Llandrindod.

This vast mountain tract, which for brevity's sake I have

described as an oblong running north and south, can be pierced by carriage folk for a short distance at one point on the east, Cwm Elan (always excepting the old Aberystwith coach road), at two points on the south, and at no point at all on the Cardigan or western slope. The narrow road, running from Llanwrtyd to Abergwessin up the higher Irfon valley, is one of the approaches from the south. The other ascends the Towy just across the hills to the westward, and in like manner terminates in what is practically a *cul-de-sac*. Abergwessin is nearly six miles from Llanwrtyd, and is a favourite drive of the very small fraction of the floating population of that place and of Llangammarch who seek distraction outside the orbit of the pump-house. The cyclist, too, may wend his way thus far without any inconvenience except that of twice wading the river, with the alternative of lifting his machine over the churchyard wall at Abergwessin, which the use of a somewhat distant footbridge necessitates. This is probably the reason I have so rarely met a cyclist on this, in other respects, excellent mountain road. To attempt a detailed description of the exquisite valley up which the latter twists and turns is not my intention. There are many such valleys in north and west Britain, and nowhere else in the whole world. Among that increasing mass of educated humanity whose lines are cast within the orbit of the vast metropolis, happy is he who has not drunk deeply in youth of scenes where hills are wild and high, and streams run loud and clear. He can then enjoy his Surrey common, his Kentish hop-fields or Sussex downs with an unalloyed enthusiasm the other can never properly achieve, for he will have always in the background of his mind a standard that rejects, not indeed the pleasure that all English landscape has for persons of taste, but the superlatives so freely lavished on the banks of the Mole or Medway, and that would seem to leave no adequate English available for, let us say, the Vale of Usk. Natural scenery is a relative matter after all, and comparisons, we know, are odious, but, mentally at any rate, they are unavoid-

able. Surrey and Kent present themselves to a vast number of enlightened persons throughout the year as a relief from Piccadilly or Queen Victoria Street, and when they return from the inevitable continental trip they are typical of the homelier charms which always strike the Briton returning to his native land after the briefest absence. But it does not do at all to go to Kent or Surrey from Breconshire or Devon. How pallid, by comparison, and thirsty and featureless and over populous it all seems! There are no compensations such as greet the returning traveller from overseas, and how much, ah! how much he has left behind. Here in the Vale of Irfon there are strips of emerald meadow and streams of white water dancing behind screens of leaves or glistening in the open sunshine. There are hanging woodlands of oak or fir, which yield as they soar upwards to birch-sprinkled steeps of golden gorse, and terminate a thousand feet above the stream in rugged outlines, where ferns and heather and dewy sward fight for a foothold amid crags and ledges of volcanic rock. Cosy homesteads, the abode of sheep-farmers, snuggle in the vale at intervals, and with every bend some small tributary brook comes spouting from the heights above to swell the Irfon, whose clear peaty waters for long periods at a time leap and bubble against the very brink of our road. No intrusive pike or scaly chub have ventured thus far. The spawning salmon run high above this in autumn floods, but now the small trout, half sated with winged food, leaps in the pools from sheer lightheartedness and high condition.

Abergwessin stands at the junction of two valleys and looks what it is, and has been for a thousand years or more, the end of all things. You may, it is true, turn here to the right up a bad road—though it is a regular circuit for carriage people—and make the long round by Llwyn Madoc and Beulah, thence back to Llanwrtyd, most of which is only a degree less beautiful than the Irfon valley. But further progress to north and west is practically barred, nor is there anything beyond. It

is said there is not a fence between here and Machynlleth in North Wales, so continuous is the mountain. If this is not precisely accurate it is at least sufficiently suggestive of the situation.

Though Abergwessin has only an inn and a house or two, it had till lately two ancient churches. Llandewi and Llanfihangel, but a few hundred yards apart on either side of the river. The former is now in ruins, the latter standing on its old site among yew trees, popularly believed to have seen a thousand summers, has been beautifully restored or rather re-built some thirty years ago. Now to place a new church upon so venerable a site, and erect a building that shall be in keeping with the everlasting hills that from all sides look down on it, and upon almost nothing else but the wide flats and the converging streams which meet under its walls, was no easy task. Speaking as a mere layman in such matters, I could not readily have imagined that the spirit of the scene could have been conciliated and reproduced by modern hands in such harmonious fashion. It was done by the Thomas family of Llwyn Madoc who are buried here; and there was doubtless no stint to cramp the architect's hand. As a matter of fact though, it is the very simplicity of the building, its massive tower, admirable proportions and harmonious tone that have solved a difficult problem so far as the landscape is concerned.

Farming is perhaps a more serious matter to the landlord of The Grouse Inn at Abergwessin than drawing corks and broaching beer barrels for the passing traveller. Not that the latter need fear any stint of simple refreshment; indeed, stray anglers stay here for weeks at a time. But if you lighted on Abergwessin at shearing time, as I have done, when thirty or forty pairs of shears are hard at work for days together in the sheds yonder, and thousands of sheep, gathered from the surrounding hills, are filling the valley with their persistent clamour, you would probably draw the same inference. For we are now in a country where wool and mutton reign supreme. Land is not counted by acres but by the sheep it will maintain. And the

sheep that these solitudes have to carry are the old original Welsh mountaineers, that at four years old weigh about 9 lbs. a quarter, and at present prices produce almost nothing per head in wool. The "Radnor," the "Kerry Hill," and the "Clun Forest," and all the various crosses with the Shropshire are scarcely hardy enough to flourish on the thin pastures which drain into the Elan and the Claerwen, the Towy and the Terfy, the Irfon and the Ystwith, or face the winter storms which lash the slopes of these Brecon mountains with such tremendous force. The annual losses of the Welsh Highland sheep-farmers have been rated by experts as high as 20 per cent. Their sheep winter on the mountains and get nothing but an occasional bite of hay in the very worst of weather, while the tussocks of coarse grass, that sheep will rather starve than eat, furnish quite a tolerable living to the hardy ponies who are their companions on the hills. It is a further fact, too, that the farmers who range on the open runs do not work together so harmoniously as those in Cumberland, or organise so well. It is said, moreover, that there is too much harrying and "dogging" of sheep that are regarded as outside their limits and not the same co-operation in collecting strays, and furthermore that some of the ranges have been sadly overstocked. As in Cumberland, too, the flocks on the open ranges in Wales must, of necessity, be more or less fixtures. They never actually go with the land as in some parts of the North, but arrangements have to be made so that an incoming tenant takes over the sheep wherever possible, since for obvious reasons a flock acquainted with a range is worth a great deal more than one that is strange to it.

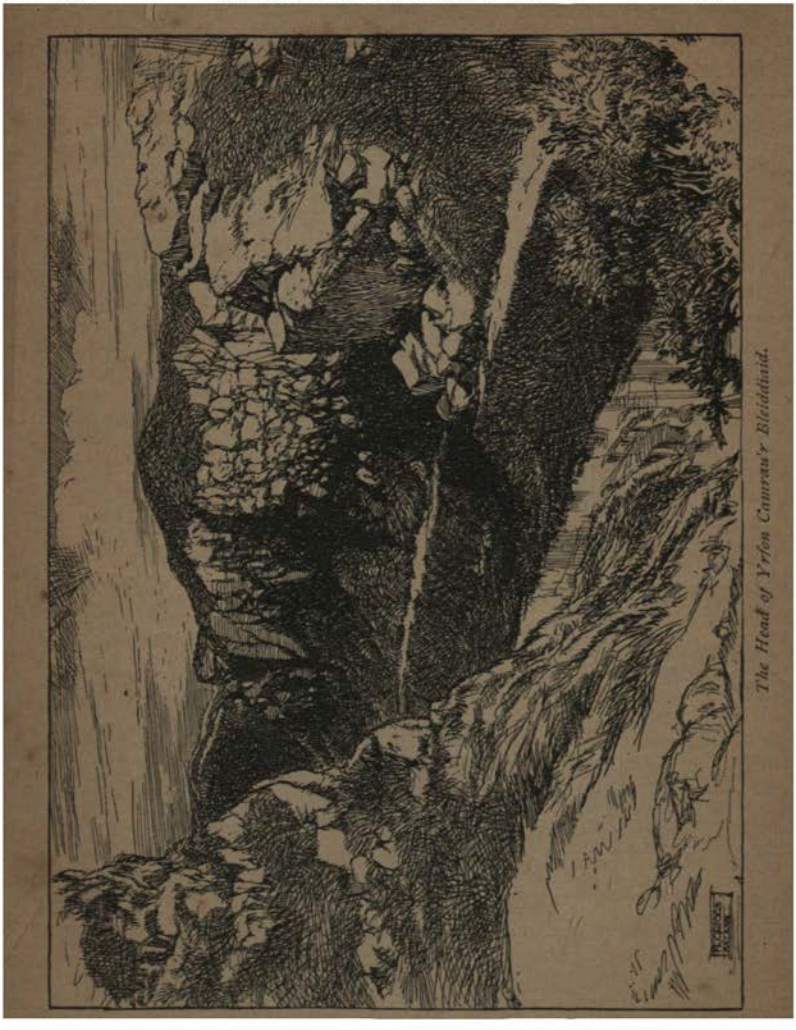
Abergwessin, though nowadays so far outside all track of travel, stands on the old drovers' road from Cardiganshire to England. And this meant much, when almost the sole cash product of the county was four-footed stock. When Charles the First was sowing disaffection in all the more accessible counties by his audacious impost of ship money, Cardigan, like her

neighbours, paid the first instalment without demur, from sheer ignorance of the technicalities of the dispute, only complaining because her assessment was more than half that of Pembroke and Carmarthen. There was no gold at that time in these outlying counties, and the whole sum was collected in silver, and, for safety's sake, sent to London under the escort of the bands of drovers that, at certain seasons of the year, united together for better security. It may be noted that, at the next attempt of the infatuated monarch, the Welsh counties were by no means so complaisant, and the High Sheriffs, whose unpleasant task it was to collect the tax, were at their wits' end, while those who got the money begged, in piteous accents, to be excused accompanying it to London in person, having regard to the length and the risks of the journey. Nor were these dangers fanciful, for the Sheriff of Denbigh was actually drowned crossing a river, and his ship money went down with him beyond recovery, as is related in quite authentic records.

If the cyclist is callous as to his tyres and is prepared to walk half the way, there is really no reason why he should not follow the old drovers' road on its striking journey to Tregaron and the low country of Cardigan. A sprinkling of farmers in the heart of the mountains have no other exit, and though the saddle, to be sure, is their chief means of progress, stout gigs and carts have frequently to negotiate it, and it is kept in sufficient repair for such rough purposes. Such visitors, however, as find their way to Abergwessin, are generally encouraged to leave their horses at the ancient hostelry, and adventure a mile or so further up the Irfon by this same Tregaron road. For just where the last remnant of civilisation, in the shape of wildish woodlands and wall enclosures, are abandoned for the open mountain, the river tumbles, for some distance in a succession of fine rapids and cascades, through a bosky gorge. Down in the hollow itself, you are smothered in a fine confusion of spreading foliage and waist-deep fern beds, of huge boulders and precipitous rocks, that stir the tumbling waters to fury, or hold them chained and seething in glorious brown pools. Now

the trout of these upper portions of the Irfon are numerous and exceeding small, but in the clear amber pools beneath the spreading foliage of this turbulent half-mile lies many a goodly fish. One stormy and soaking morning, in that unpromising season, mid-July, I scrambled up this same gorge, armed with one of John Roberts's, of Llangollen, nine-foot coracle rods, and a coch-y-bond-du as tail fly, and had quite a nice dish of honest half-pounders on reaching the open moorland at the top. However, it is not amid storm and tempest in the channel of this stream that the stranger would elect to view the scenic glories of what is known as the "Wolf's Leap." But on the rough road, cut in the hill side, three hundred feet above the torrent, I would ask him to take his stand, and that, for choice, upon some sunny afternoon in summer. Hence he may look down over the leafy tops, or through the gnarled trunks of storm-battered indigenous oak trees, at the long shimmer of the rapids in the ravine below, and feast his eyes on the green slopes of Llwynderw, which leap up on the further shore with an infinite variety of glade and grove, of lawn and rock, of thicket and fern, such as nature and the sheep's tooth have made it.

But it is along the old drovers' road, as it dives into the wild mountains beyond the remnants of these primitive Welsh forests, that I would glance for a moment and, better still, travel for a mile or two, if only to see the full spirit of its eloquent and rugged desolation. There is neither tameness nor softness here! Shoulder behind shoulder the northern walls of the valley rear savage heads of rock and heights of precipitous cliffs above the scanty turf which, torn and riven with rains and strewn with rocky *débris*, run sharply down from their bases to the narrow vale below. Here road and river, a ribbon of yellow and a twisting thread of silver, wander side by side through the moorland grasses into a land of mystery. The "Wolf's Leap"—which gives an excuse perhaps for visiting the entry, at any rate, of this valley, rather than a motive for it—is but the rugged channel of a brook, that tumbles down somewhere amid the sea of ferns, that from base to summit clothe



The Head of Yrfon Camrau'r Bleiddiaid.

the lofty hillside opposite with quite wonderful luxuriance. For hundreds of feet upwards, softening down every rugged

edge, filling every hollow in the mountain side; radiant with that silvery sheen which slanting sunshine throws so lightly but effectively on beds of bracken, the soft, feathery carpet rolls to the sky-line. Here and there grey crags and fragments of cliff break out finely, or a mountain ash, refusing to be smothered, stands waist-deep in the silvery waves. The south Welsh hills are notable for their growth of fern, but nowhere have I seen any drapery quite so gorgeous as the mantle that covers the northern slopes of Llwynderw and waves around the rocky edges of the "Wolf's Leap."

There is no better way of exploring these unvisited highlands than on horseback, or better still on a pony of the right kind, always provided you have a friend with you who knows his bearings. For large areas of both hilltop and slope that will carry a sheep or a man will, even in a dry summer, let a horse and rider through the thin crust that covers them, and a "bogged" horse plunging itself gradually deeper into the top of a mountain a dozen miles from nowhere is not a situation to be courted. I have been fortunate enough to enjoy many days in the saddle in this wild country under the most favoured conditions and the best of guidance, but even then we had at times our dilemmas and delays. It is a trite saying that a mountain bred pony will keep himself and his rider out of trouble in a bog. But a dry summer will sometimes make both the mountaineer and his pony a little over confident on doubtful ground; and again the horseman on a strange mountain may get himself into a labyrinth of morass, and in casting about for an outlet, lose touch with the route he came in by and spend a grievous time, only trusting that the sun may not go down on his endeavours, if the day should by any chance be far spent. Mild adventures in bogs, either on foot or on horseback, have been frequent enough in the lives of most people of out-door tastes, whose lot has been much thrown amongst British moorland or mountain, but it is not given to many perhaps to go down with a horse and trap.

This exhilarating experience, however, was permitted to the writer in these very mountains within extremely recent date.

Now on the Cardiganshire side, and within sight of the very Tregaron road we have just been watching disappear into the wilderness, lies a lonely tarn, Llyn Berwyn. The starting point of my expedition was Tregaron, its goal the aforesaid lake. A local friend was my pilot, his dogcart our conveyance, and a cob of mature years and a long reputation for hardiness and good sense (happily) was our motive power up the frightful pitches that mark the descent of the Tregaron road into the lowlands of Cardiganshire. What my companion did not know about his native hills and all that concerns them was not worth knowing. But having achieved the toilsome four mile drag to the summit of the mountains and enjoyed the glorious retrospect over the land of pigs and parsons, and looked at the lake sparkling on our right amid the green moorland with half a mile of tussocky rushes and moor grass between us and it, my friend had a deplorable inspiration, and changed the usual and more cautious programme. "I really think," he said, "after this dry summer we can drive the cart all right up to the lake. Anyway I'll try it." And he did! In considerably less than two minutes, and without any warning, after a quite promising beginning, the shafts were resting flat upon the ground and most of the cob was under it. We were miles from a house and the situation appeared critical. The average horse in these conditions flounders panic-stricken till his last state is very much worse than his first. This one, however, behaved like an angel, and more than sustained his local reputation, in a crisis quite outside most equine experience. The cart was fast up to the hubs, and getting it out and the harness off the beast was, to begin with, no simple matter. The depth of the bog was, of course, an unknown quantity, and I think my companion was seriously bracing himself for a last farewell to the trusty quadruped on which he had learned to ride as a boy. But the way this level-

headed animal eventually got himself out of that bog was quite astonishing, and showed that he had not lived twenty years in the world for nothing. And as he stood up without his harness, covered from head to foot with wet black mud, shook himself and looked his master reproachfully in the face, we both felt that we had got out of the business a great deal better than we deserved. And so evidently thought the Fates, for they gave us for our sins as blank a day's fishing on Lake Berwyn as could be expressed in arithmetic, though the skies were kind and favouring winds curled gently over the peaty waters, and the very trout, fine fellows too, came up now and again and took anything that came along except the choice selections of our flybook.

It is a delightful ride, or walk, too, across the mountains from a point just short of Abergwessin, whence a rough road past the homestead of Llwynderw soon dwindles into a mountain path that climbs the great, humpy ridges which divide the upper waters of the Towy from those of the Irfon. There is nothing here but sheep and curlews and vistas of billowy solitude, blue and hazy, rolling away to the north and west. An abandoned lead mine in a hollow of the hills in no way disturbs the infinite peace of the wilderness, unless the weird groaning of an old and rusty pump, which the mountain stream still sports with, can be regarded as an inharmonious note. The drop to the Towy is grand and precipitous. We find that famous river in a far different mood from the one in which we shall shortly meet it, and of which poets, Welsh and English, have so often sung. Here it is in its infancy, though, of a truth, a sufficiently lusty one. Chained in a gorge between steep hills, part rock, part clinging woods of native oak, but surprising rugged and imposing, it struggles southward and we may look down on its thin, clear streams, shining far beneath us like silver, amid some scanty strip of green pasture or descending in snowy foam-wreaths to the quiet of a rock-bound salmon pool. A rude cart-road leads hence up the glen of the Towy for a mile or so,

Head of the Towy.

till at the very end of the world the lonely homestead of Vanog, familiar name enough among sheep-farmers, stands perched above the raging torrent.

Homely white walls, a few wind-smitten shade trees, a front-yard full of collies taking their ease in these piping times between shearing and the autumn fairs, thousands of sheep upon the mountains round, and you have here as perfect a picture of pastoral isolation as could be found in Wales. The tenant of the waste too, in this case, is a farmer of the gentler sex, who is not held to suffer any disadvantage whatever on that account.

It is some three or four miles down the river, however, where the fringes of civilisation begin to trench upon its banks, that the historic spot of the Upper Towy is reached. This is the old farmhouse and primitive Church of Ystryd ffyn and the rugged hill of Dinas, at whose foot the Towy and the Dorthea meet amid a chaos of tremendous boulders. It is a wild and savage scene, for though the lower slopes and river banks are rich enough with sweet and sheeny bracken, and groves of ash and glades of birch and glowing patches of gorse, rock, or heather, the mountain background is singularly barren. Washed almost naked of its natural clothing by storm and tempest, it stands up with a grim asperity of rock and shale that would be gloomier still, perhaps, but for the ruddy tinge that lights it. Cardigan, Carmarthen, and Brecon, all meet in this wild valley, and a few visitors of discretion find their way here every summer from the country below. And in the hill of Dinas yonder, above the meeting of the waters, is the cave of Twm Sion Catti, a half legendary hero who is the presiding genius of all this country, and the only notable character of this description that I know of in Wales. The Principality is rich enough in heroes, but they are chiefly of the serious, mail-clad kind. Twm Sion Catti belonged to a more recent period, and to the Robin Hood or Dick Turpin type, though not exactly akin to either. The story of his life and adventures would fill much more than a chapter of this little book, but I cannot do less than give a

page or two to a personage who, in spite of much grotesque extravagance of humour and adventure, relieves the somewhat humdrum record of Cambria reconciled and submissive.

Twm Sion Catti—*Anglicé*, Tom John, the son of Catti—was the son of a peasant woman at Tregaron, who had found favour in the sight of no less a person than Sir John Wynne of Gwydir, on one of those expeditions which that enterprising knight was accustomed to make in the interests of land or mineral speculations. This would place the hero's birth at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but he does not seem to have been recognised by his illustrious father, at any rate, not until he made something of a name for himself. We need not concern ourselves over much with his early youth, though it was full enough of mad pranks and adventures. These were undertaken, for the most part, at the expense of tyrannical squires and overbearing parsons, for the amusement of jovial squires and chuckling curates and the unqualified delight of the humbler classes. The boy was apprenticed to a farmer near Tregaron, and was afterwards taken on as a servant by his landlord, whom he delighted in victimising. Good-looking and dashing, he was of course a favourite with the ladies, from those in the servants' hall, where he began his career, to those in the drawing-rooms of the great, to which he afterwards aspired. He was constantly before the magistrates, one portion of whom regarded him as a fiend incarnate, while the other split their sides with laughter at his audacious pranks. He would steal a parson's horse in Cardiganshire and sell it to a squire in Carmarthen, or he would attend a fair in some impenetrable disguise, ask to try a horse's paces, and gallop away with it into the next county and sell it to a friend of the victim, leaving them to fight about the ownership, while he made himself scarce for a time. His motives, however, were so obviously frolicsome that he always escaped the gaol or gibbet. The turning point in his fortunes was when he rescued the beautiful young wife of Sir John Devereux, lord of Ystryd ffyn here

below, from the grip of a notorious highwayman "Dio the Devil," a drama which took place just outside Llandovery. The grateful and jovial Sir John, making the best of the Gwydir blood that flowed in Twm's veins, took him home to Ystryd ffyn and treated him as a gentleman and an equal. But Twm far more than repaid his maintenance by the boundless amusement he afforded to Sir John and his neighbours. The squire of Ystryd ffyn was a mighty Nimrod, but even he could not ride like Twm. The latter was accustomed to lay heavy wagers that he could accomplish feats which appeared impossible, and he always won the money for himself and his patrons who backed him. One day a supercilious English stranger, staying at Ystryd ffyn, was boasting of the achievements of his horse, a high-mettled thoroughbred. Twm promptly laid him twenty pounds that he would leap his horse where the Englishman durst not follow him. The latter accepted the bet with scorn and derision. When the company had assembled at the rendezvous on the mountain selected for testing the matter, Twm, after some delay, was seen riding up on a sorry jade, fit only for the knacker's yard, and blindfolded with a thick towel over his head. His friends waxed anxious for the money they had laid, and the scornful lip of the well-mounted stranger curled higher than ever. "Now," said our hero, "follow me," and without more ado, and to the amazement of the spectators, he put the blindfolded horse at a low bank overhanging a precipice, and as the poor brute floundered innocently into space, Twm threw himself off into some bushes that overhung the cliff, and grasping them with his hands scrambled up again, while the horse was already stretched lifeless far below. The haughty and mortified stranger paid up at once and rode his thoroughbred out of the country without delay. Twm explained to Sir John that the unfortunate animal that had helped him to win them their money was one that had been purchased by the huntsman for hound meat and was about to be slaughtered that very night.

Sir John had about this time a large sum of money to send up to his London agent, and who so clever and trusty, in what was then a most difficult commission, as his young friend Twm. With a passion for disguises and mimicry, the young man dressed himself as an exaggerated booby of a Welsh rustic and on a mountain pony started for London with Sir John's treasure. For long all went well, but at a lonely inn among the Wiltshire downs just short of Marlborough, he overheard the landlady and an obvious highwayman discussing him in a fashion that showed his mission was discovered, or guessed at it, and his life in the utmost peril. So before leaving next morning he ostentatiously pulled some gold out of the horn of his saddle before the eyes of the landlady, and pressed it back again as if for greater security. Out on the road, however, he pocketed his treasure, and soon after, as he expected, the highwayman galloped after him, cursing him, waving pistols and calling him to stand and deliver. Now there happened to be a large pond by the road-side and the quick-witted Twm jumped from his pony, snatched off his old saddle and hurled it as far as he was able into the shallow water. The highwayman, thanks to the landlady, being fully assured the treasure was here, and regarding its bearer as a sort of village idiot, paid no attention to him but dismounted, threw his reins over a paling and proceeded to walk into the water after his prize. Twm lost not a moment, but jumped on the back of the highwayman's thoroughbred and rode towards Marlborough as fast as horse flesh could carry him. Arrived there, he discovered that it was the famous Tom Dorbell whom he had left wading in a pond after a dilapidated saddle, and whose high-mettled steed he had acquired for his own use. The inhabitants of Marlborough, it is said, made a great fuss over our hero, and he was entertained in the Town Hall, which attention he received, it is said, with the most perfect complaisance. He sold the horse for a large sum of money and decided to complete the journey on foot, as less likely to attract attention, though for his better protection he purchased

a pistol. Arriving near Hounslow without further adventure worth telling here, and being ignorant of the sinister reputation of that famous heath, he grew confident and careless—and was taken wholly by surprise when a ferocious-looking villain suddenly held a pistol to his head and demanded his all. There was nothing for it but to comply, which Twm did, and in the meantime revolved in his mind how he could possibly get out of such a hopeless-looking predicament. Feigning the part of a rustic terrified at losing his master's money, he then humbly, in broken Welsh-English, begged the robber to fire a few bullets into his coat, which he hung on a bush, to give evidence of a struggle. The other, suspecting no guile from such a booby, readily complied, Twm leaping about and clapping his hand like a child at each shot. There was one pistol left. "And now," said Twm, "just one shot through my hat, master, and that will be grand." The highwayman, who had quite entered into the fun, thoughtlessly complied, and fired his last ball through Twm's hat as it hung on the fence. "Now," said the unconquerable hero of Tregaron, "it is my turn," and, pulling his sole pistol out of his inner jacket, he called to the robber to disgorge. The latter, with the grace popularly supposed to distinguish his profession when hopelessly outwitted, accepted his defeat with unconcealed admiration of Twm, who proceeded on his way with more caution. But at this very moment a wounded gentleman rode up at a gallop and besought our hero to run back at best speed, since a carriage with a lady in it was being beset and overpowered by robbers just down the road. Twm, ever forward where the fair sex was concerned, sped back upon winged feet and came upon a coach with a robber at each window, both so absorbed in threatening the occupants within that Twm, creeping stealthily up, blew out the brains of the nearest one, while the other fled. The travellers were no less than the Bishop of St. Asaph and his daughter, who took our hero on to London and introduced him to all sorts

of great people. And when he had purchased smart clothes with the price of the highwayman's horse, and was known as a son of Sir John Wynne, and a champion of the highway, he ruffled it among the best for many weeks. A tender passion for his patron's lady, however, which should have been mentioned before, soon turned his thoughts and his steps to the banks of the Towy, where he was received again with joy. Soon after this, as if to stimulate Twm's ambition, Sir John Devereux in the ardour of the chase leaped his horse over a cliff and broke his neck, leaving the lovely widow, who had already conceived an immense fancy for Twm which would surely now blossom into something warmer.

But at the first whisper of such a thing, the Prices of Brecon—father and sisters of the lady, the proudest of the proud—swooped down on Ystryd ffyn, and the course of true love ran the proverbially crooked course. It is a very long story. Indeed, all I have said about Twm Sion Catti is but a mere incident or two in his dashing and dubious career. But the faithful lover, driven from Ystryd ffyn, took up his abode in a neighbouring tavern, exchanging it at times for yonder cave in Dinas Hill that bears his name. The scorn of the proud relations Twm could bear, but he began to doubt the fidelity of the lady. He had never in his life failed in anything upon which he had set his heart's desire, so he now determined to bring his suspense to an end. He descended on the Manor-house of Ystryd ffyn, and demanded through a lower window an interview with its fair owner, which she at last conceded. She showed herself, however, so determined to throw him over, though not, perhaps, too willingly, that he played his last card, begging that she would at least let him kiss her hand before he left her for ever. On the lady extending her hand through the window, Twm seized it, and held her wrist as in a vice, and swore by all his gods that if she did not swear then and there to bestow it upon him in marriage, he would sever it from her arm with the sword which he drew with his right

hand from its sheath. Perhaps Sir John's relict was not wholly sorry to be thus intimidated. It is needless to say she yielded, and Twm was wedded that very day by one of his parson friends, in spite of all the Prices of Brecon. He gave up at the same time for good all his wild pranks, and settled down as a model country gentleman at Ystryd ffyn and lived to a good old age. And yet there are captious antiquaries who vow there was no such Twm Sion Catti as this, and that the real man was a bard of deep learning and advanced culture and the most profound respectability. I for one do not believe them. There are plenty of bards as there are plenty of heroes in Wales, but the country cannot spare Twm Sion Catti, and at some future day, no doubt, when the touring world has discovered what a superb wilderness lies here, about the head waters of the Towy, his cave may be shown at 6*d*. a head, and ginger beer retailed at the entrance. But I hope not just yet. Indeed, it is more likely that the vast needs of London may perpetuate the wild seclusion of this mountain valley. For in the great looming question of water supply the authorities have done something more than cast a covetous eye on the pure waters of the Dorthea and the Upper Towy. In short, the whole district has been surveyed and a report drawn up by distinguished engineers against the day when the matter becomes one of practical politics—five, ten, twenty years hence. This scheme, however, differs somewhat from both that of Lake Vyrnwy and of Cwm Elan. The plan is here to tunnel through the block of mountain we have just crossed, and that divides the Towy from the Irfon and the Wye Basin; to carry an allotted portion of the Towy water into the valley of the Irfon, and there, between Llanwrtyd and Builth, create the great lake or lakes for supplying London. This scheme, at any rate, will be ready for submission when the time is ripe, and is at this moment, I believe, the most definite and promising of any. But what its fate may be, who shall say?

In the Vale of Towy.

CHAPTER V

On leaving Llanwrtyd for the vale of Towy and the south-west, there is no alternative but to continue on the route that brought us here. Nor, indeed, is there any cause to complain of such restriction. I have more than once alluded to the broad plateau of half-tamed waste, that, between the Epynt and Ellinneth mountains spreads upwards from Llanwrtyd to the brink of the vale of Carmarthen. It is over this now that for four or five miles we pursue an uneventful course upon a little-used road, though always within touch of the much-used railway, whose engines puff and snort vigorously as they drag their lengthy burdens up the steep slope. There is nothing to call for particular notice beyond the skimpy

hedges and stone walls that fence the road. The mountains, bold and steep, press gradually closer on the right. On the left the fenceless wild of snipey bog and moorland verdure rolls far away towards the south, with that suggestion of infinity that some call beautiful and others bleak, but which plovers, curlews, kites, hill foxes and fairies at any rate love well.

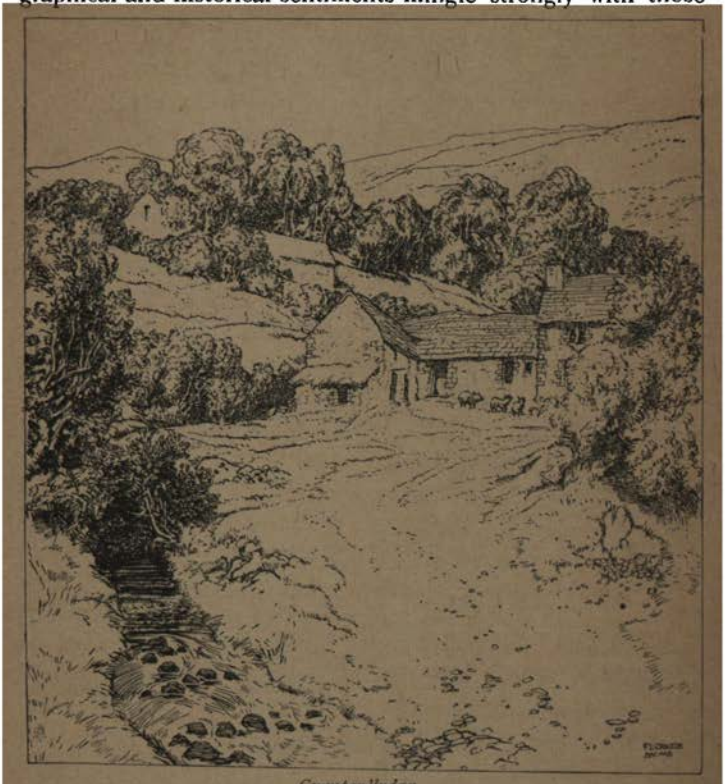
As the last effort at enclosure dies away and our road wanders out on to the open moorland, the railway below ceases its struggles, and the panting locomotive plunges with relief into the gloom of a tunnel, which saves it the last two hundred feet or so of climb over this remarkable pass.

Right in the centre of the pass, with our road twisting round its foot, and quite isolated from either of the mountain ranges which here press together, springs up the pointed peak of the Sugar Loaf. A notable landmark in this part of Wales, it stands like a sentinel between two widely sundered districts, the basins of the Wye and Towy; between the land of Norman rule in old days and that of the Welsh Princes. To-day it marks the scene of one of the most striking railway engineering achievements in Wales. Above all, it looks out, with wonderful dignity of pose, and far-stretching limit of vision, over the famous vale of Towy, that from its pointed summit can be traced wandering for forty miles through shadow and sunshine, amid the green ridges or the dark hills, which seem to cover the whole surface of Carmarthenshire.

The summit is barely fifteen hundred feet above sea level, and perhaps four hundred from the road below, where you may safely leave your trap or cycle while making the mild ascent on the springy fern-sprinkled turf which clothes this curious outcrop of the Lower Silurian system. If the day be fair do not by any means neglect this easy but remunerative enterprise. I know of no more delightful lounge than the soft sward which nature has spread over the narrow rocky summit of this wonderful conning tower she threw up when the world was younger. I am not

Towards Crickhowel from the Bwlch.
(*See page 409*)

going to descant on all that can be seen from it to the south and to the west. It is an outlook above all, where the topographical and historical sentiments mingle strongly with those



Cwmpenllydan.

awakened by mere beauty of landscape, and this last is beautiful enough of a truth.

How the beacon fires of war must have blazed on this green cone when Princes from below or Barons from above went a-raiding! For through a gap at the back signals could

readily be flashed across the Wye to Radnor forest, while to the front the whole world of south-west Wales could be roused to fear or passion by a single torch. We may pause too for a moment, should a train be passing westward, and note the curious sight it presents, as, emerging from the tunnel at the head of the gorge below, it creeps cautiously downwards along the side of the huge green wall of turf and bracken that seems to drop from the very clouds to a narrow cleft far below us, where a mountain stream, the infant Brân, leaps and sparkles in the sun. And indeed the passengers in this same train have glimpses from the window as they wriggle down the steep and somewhat fearsome descent, only a degree less gorgeous than is our outlook here.

We on our cycles can glide at leisure down the long descent, though on the opposite side of the gorge from the railroad track, to the levels of the Brân valley. We see the woodlands of Glan Brân, once a seat of the Gwynnes, and still descending, with the green uplands of the forest of Cil-y-cwm rolling skyward on our right and the last spurs of the Epynt on our left, pass Cynghordy, and are again in touch with humanity, though of a Carmarthenshire type, for the county line crosses the top of the pass. There is a market somewhere in the Vale of Towy nearly every day in the week, and rustics of various ages and both sexes, mounted on ponies or a-foot, are setting their faces down the valley of the Brân. Mowing machines are rattling through the meadow grass, and cultivators are running up the red turnip drills, steered by musical hinds, who are waking the echoes, not as the passing Saxon might suppose, with the ancient strains of Wales, but with those more probably of last Sunday's hymn, at Cynghordy chapel. Great oak and ash trees shake their canopy of leaves above our heads. High banks of ferns and foxgloves, capped with lush growths of willow, birch and brier-rose, border the road. Bright-tinted homesteads peep shyly through the thick foliage with which

provident tenants long dead and gone have surrounded them, to the great comfort doubtless of their descendants in these warm south-western valleys.

Llandovery stands, not literally at the head of the vale of Towy, but near where that river, after a twenty mile course through mountain gorges and narrow valleys, meets the Gwydderig and the Brân in a more spacious country, running thence for nearly thirty miles to the tidewater at Carmarthen, amid scenery of a different class and with a temper more suited to its changed surroundings.

Famous in Welsh life, Welsh history, and Welsh song is this Vale of Towy. Putting aside Glamorgan, who turns her great humpy back towards the rest of Wales, and hugs her fatness and her treasures between the mountains and the sea-coast, the Vale of Towy is the heart of South Wales as Carmarthen is its capital. In the days of the Welsh princes it was the political centre of the southern kingdom, and, save Glamorgan, a province unto itself from earliest times, the richest or at least the most distinguished strip of old South Wales. Here, as was natural, men and consequently warriors were thicker on the land than elsewhere, and here was a rallying point for the native chieftains of the south in their long struggle with the Anglo-Norman power. Glamorgan fell under Norman rule in the person of Fitzhamon and his twelve companion knights in the days of Rufus, as Brecon and Radnor succumbed to the sword of Bernard de Newmarch. But Carmarthen and the Vale of Towy kept the native interests alive, and the Norman from all serious footing, till, simultaneously with North Wales and Llewelyn, it fell before the invincible Edward, and, happily for itself, jumped at once from a native province into a royal county. As arms and men and flocks abounded here in the days of the Plantagenets, so, for the same reason do country houses, prosperous or ancient families, and fine farms distinguish the Vale of Towy at this time above most parts of South Wales. Something of what the Vale of Clwyd is

to the north that of Towy is to the south, though, strangely enough, while the former was till quite recent times the peculiar stronghold of the old Anglo-Norman families, the latter has boasted a larger share than common of the ancient Welsh blood among its ruling class. Yet in both these notable tracts the Welsh language holds its own among the tenantry with tolerable obstinacy.

Llandovery is an extremely typical South Welsh market town. After this it may not seem felicitous to note that our old friend Dr. Malkin lavished strenuous epithets upon it. He also says that the very native who showed him around confessed it to be the most uncivilised place in Wales. The good doctor evidently had no notion of a second visit. But as I hope to be there again some day, I should like to remark that there must have been some little improvement in the last century. I should also like to say that George Borrow considered Llandovery a "small but beautiful town." I am bound to say there is a marked Hibernian air about the place, which may be described as of a mottled pink and somewhat dissipated complexion for the most part. A couple of streets and as many thousand inhabitants would, I fancy, describe its general bulk with sufficient accuracy. But really this is all of no importance. It is not well to jeer at these little country towns like a cockney out for a holiday, who writes them down as "God-forsaken holes," if people are not tumbling over each other on the pavement at midday and there is no variety show in the evening. Llandovery is the trading mart of a large agricultural district and has its appointed days of animation and money changing. Seedy as these unpretentious streets may look, they have seen gay times in their day, and raked in money plentifully, and even yet there is both mirth and money going at the appointed seasons. Once upon a time too, before the days of railroads, when country society was less complex and roving and did all its frolicking at home, Llandovery, I have been told, was the scene of balls and routs,

where fair women and brave men gathered from every part of the Vale of Towy. Times have changed all over Britain in this respect, not wholly perhaps for the better. Llandovery, at any rate in these days, does not look as if it could stand the strain of a smart modern gathering, but it looks like cattle and sheep, all over and from one end to the other But Llandovery has really other claims to fame, the most immediately urgent being its possession of one of the two schools in Wales which take modest rank among the now numerous public schools of Britain. Its buildings, standing amid pleasant grounds outside the town, with their playing fields spreading out towards the Towy, give some distinction and, I have no doubt, more substantial advantages to the place. The Head Mastership of Llandovery school, moreover, has often proved a stage on the road to a Welsh bishopric. But I have not nearly done with Llandovery. A well-known printing-press, for instance, existed here at one time, and turned out among other volumes the *Mabinogion* of Lady Charlotte Guest. One of the most famous, too, of Welsh divines was born and buried here, and spent most of his time as vicar of the parish church. This last is the restored edition of an ancient fabric standing on the flats outside the town and is dedicated to St. Dingat, a saint of whose claims to fame I know positively nothing.

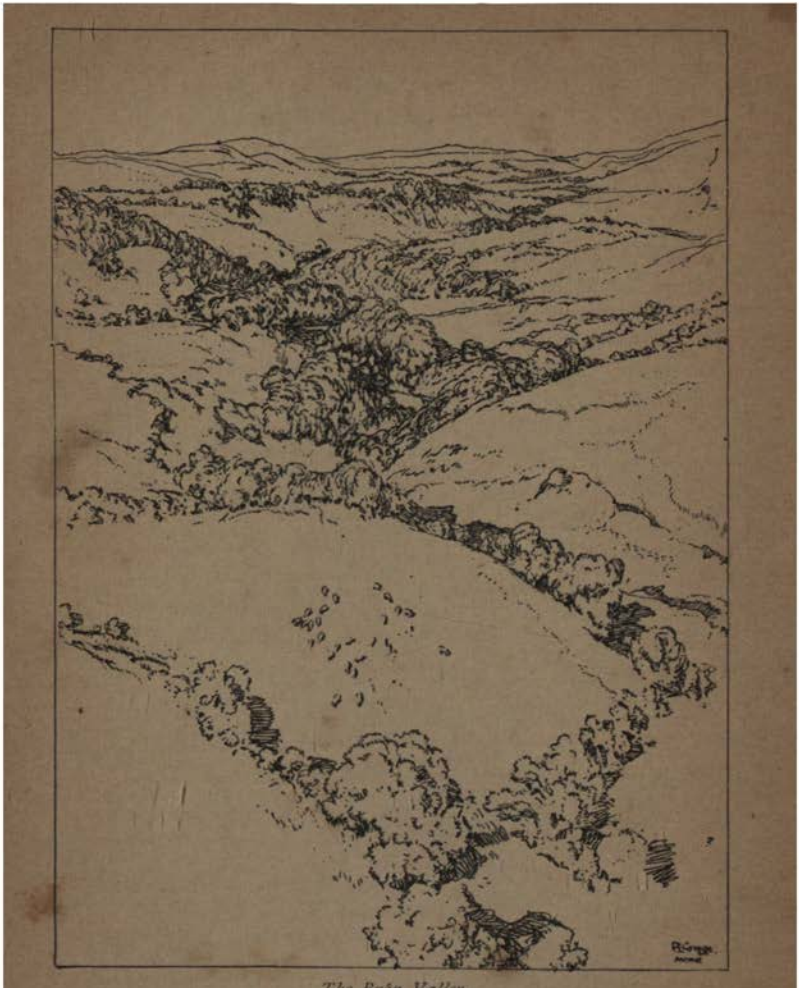
As to the fame of its erst incumbent, "Vicar Pritchard," as he was, and still is, universally called, he flourished in the time of the two first Stuarts, a period when religion in Wales was in a grievous state. It is said that during the earlier and unreformed stage of his ministration he used to get so drunk that a wheelbarrow was usually at hand to carry him home at night, but that he was effectually cured of this unclerical behaviour by the sight of an inebriated goat and the shock it gave him. Henceforth he became a changed man and a vigorous reformer, of the cheerful and practical rather than the morose kind. The *Book of Sports* just at this time had been ordered to be read in the churches, as a counterblast to

the growth of Puritanism, and for the furtherance of Sunday athletics. The Welsh were conspicuous, as already noted, for this form of Sabbath occupation, and had come to regard their church towers mainly for their utility as fives courts, and the smoother part of their graveyards as the orthodox arena for dancing parties. They at any rate needed no book of sports to stimulate such deplorable levity. Vicar Pritchard, good man, after the goat incident, observed the lax habits of the time with grief and pain, but had the unusual discrimination to recognise that if these amusements were to be put down, something attractive must be offered in their place. He instituted, therefore, musical gatherings within the church, and wrote Welsh hymns which he set to music, a then novel form of composition which exactly hit the taste of his people. The Vicar's hymns became known all over Wales. He wrote no less than a hundred and seventy, and humble people from one end of the Principality to the other who knew nothing else could repeat them by the score. *Canwyll Cymry*, or *The Welshman's Candle*, is said to have done more good in Wales than any book ever published, save the translated Bible. He was, moreover, a great pulpit orator, the first of his day in Wales. And when, as Chancellor of St. David's, he preached at that ancient fane, it would not hold the people who flocked to hear him, so he was constrained to address them in the open air. Vicar Pritchard died during the Civil War, and was buried, as already indicated, in Llandingat churchyard. But the place of his grave was soon forgotten, for when Bishop Bull of St. David's, sixty years afterwards, wished to be laid beside the great Rees Pritchard, for the admiration in which he held him, the spot where the good man's bones were mouldering could not be identified.

A much more attractive church, however, is that of Llanfair-y-bryn, which crowns a lofty eminence half-a-mile to the north of the town, and occupies the site of a Roman camp. Its massive old tower and embowering trees, and picturesque, high-perched graveyard, commanding delightful views up the Brân

valley to the Sugar Loaf and surrounding mountains, make altogether a place of great charm. George Borrow, when he was in Llandovery, found his way up here to an evening service, and, in his quaint fashion, relates how, after the prayers were over, a few stayed behind while the parson took his stand in a pew, and addressed them on the duty of attending a forthcoming sacrament. Some of these, says Borrow, explained to the good pastor their unworthiness to partake, and as each cause for offence was given, the former, and many in the audience, chimed in with long-drawn groans. An acquaintance of mine, a worthy and well-known tradesman of Llandovery, was a member of that group in the church as a young man, and well remembers George Borrow's somewhat surprising presence there. I have another acquaintance too, who dined with him at Dr. Kennedy's at Shrewsbury School, when he was starting on his last immortal tramp. I don't know why one wants to wring the hand of any one who knew George Borrow in his active days. I know that I have myself that impulse to a quite ridiculous degree. Nor is the "Castle Inn" at Llandovery a hostelry to which I should feel, under ordinary circumstances, greatly drawn. But I have turned in there more than once in passing for the sole and simple reason that the eccentric genius, who haunts my fancy as I come upon his tracks, once had bed and supper there. And yet his conversation with the waiter, and dissertations over the whiskey and water afterwards, would not be dared for their irrelevant simplicity by any other writer.

The "Castle Inn," too, reminds me that a portion of the ancient fortress itself still remains to give yet further distinction to the town, for whose existence it was in the first instance responsible. On a grass-grown wooded rock, raised high above the swift streams of the Brân which lap its feet, a portion of the keep yet lifts its ivy-mantled walls. The castle was of no great size, though strongly fortified, as it had good reason to be; a place of arms, and nothing more, one might imagine, not of revelry or bardic gatherings; a frontier fortress to bear the first



The Brân Valley.

shock of invasion, when it came pouring through the Brecon passes—the one we ourselves have just descended, and that

other we can almost see to the eastward, whence the Gwydderig comes winding from Trecastle to join the river at our feet. It seems to have been built by the Normans about 1100 A.D., the time of their Brecon settlement. They evidently overshot their strength and reached out too far for their supports, for it fell almost immediately into the hands of the South Welsh princes, and remained a source of strife among them and their relations till the Edwardian conquest. It has some special interest in having been occupied by that Rhys ap Meredith who had the hardihood to stir up South Wales again when the great Edward was warring in France. It took its part also in the wars of Glyndwr a century later, and after that no doubt sank into ruin and repose.

The Towy comes rushing down from the north into its own vale, if the paradox be permissible, some little way out of Llandovery, and receives the Gwydderig and the Brân amid flat meadows, a mile or so below the town. The course of the vale is now south-westward, for the whole twenty-seven miles, to where Carmarthen stands at the head of tidewater, and averages, perhaps, with a few slight contractions, a mile in width. There is a good road upon either bank, but I think that upon the further shore is preferable for the cyclist, both in regard to comfort and outlook. In following it we cross the Towy, just beyond the school-playing fields and station, and, leaving a road on the right with some reluctance, since it follows up the river through lovely scenery for ten miles, to the already visited haunts of Twm Sion Catti, we swing to the left and head down the vale for Llandilo-fawr, the half-way stage to Carmarthen.

The Vale of Towy does not invite comparison with its sister valleys of the Wye and Usk any more than would the Vale of Clwyd with its more rugged rivals of the Conway and the Dee. Those intimate with Wales will recognise that the analogy though not complete is by no means an inapt one. The Vale of Towy has its own peculiar charm, its own environment, above all, its own strenuous memories. It needs no saying that these last

are in part the outcome of its gracious fertility amid a land upon all sides wild and rugged by comparison. It was a land to fight for, and to hold, and to live in, and, as I have before remarked, was the heart of old South Wales. The shapely hills that rise immediately upon either side of its meadowy flats are neither very high nor are they wild, but they are beautifully timbered or richly grassed at every point, and dotted with country houses, though at sufficiently long intervals to banish any painful suggestions of the villa residence, even when the actual buildings are of recent date. Nor must it be supposed that the Towy itself, though no longer thundering in mountain gorges, subsides into a slightly animated canal of the Trent or Avon type. No matting weeds have time to gather or mud to settle in these translucent streams that sparkle over stony shallows from pool to pool, and sweep in graceful curves through the fat pastures of the vale. . Nor are there here any ravaging pike or vulgar chub as in the harassed waters of the Wye, but only those clean, shapely denizens that nature intended to have sole dominion in such streams as these. Celebrated indeed for all time has the Towy been for the sewin that begin to run in the first July floods; and if there is a finer fish upon the table than a fresh run Towy sewin, I should like to know its species. Though not so good a salmon river as the Usk, Wye or Teify, fish run up it freely, travelling far into the mountain gorges, where, round the lonely pools of Dinaś and Ystyd ffin, the beaten track of poachers' feet may be descried from the very heights above. The stock of trout, once so ample in the Towy, has declined, as in most other British rivers, since extended drainage has sent the floods, with their food supply, all whirling seawards in such a hurry that fish and fishermen have now but two days' fun where they used to have a week. Less innocent agencies may also have been at work to the Towy's detriment. But it has recently been restocked and is as closely preserved from Llandovery downwards as it is open to both sportsman and poacher in its higher and

wilder reaches. It is not the brightness of the Towy's streams alone, however, that saves the landscape of the vale from any suspicion of the commonplace. Here and there, above the nearer wooded hills that mostly bound the view in looking from this western bank, bits of rugged mountain or dark moorland rise in grim contrast against the sky. The Black mountains, which have been our companions, though seldom very close ones, ever since we left the English border, are still with us, making their last, and by no means their least, efforts. For yonder, some eight miles away to the southward, are the sharp, shapely peaks of the Carmarthen Vans, higher than Plinlimmon at any rate, if not quite equal to their Breconshire rivals in the Vale of Usk. And as we pass Llanwrda on the one bank and Llangadock on the other, the nearer though lesser heights of Garn Goch with its British camp and Trichrug, with its three upstanding cairns, rise wild and dark above the leafy barriers of the vale.

A feeling of despair is coming over me, with the whole Vale of Towy ahead of us, and innumerable scenes, moreover, of interest and beauty lying away on either side, deep in its mountainous flanks, and the unwritten portion of my space so rapidly decreasing. I cannot, for instance, pass Llanwrda without reminding the reader, for his convenience, that a fine coach road runs from here to Lampeter, in Cardiganshire, eighteen miles away, a delightful ride through varied scenery and the main route into the western country. Nor can I ignore Llangadock, lying low on the further shore, since it is as big as Llandovery, though without its distinctions, unless the site of a castle may be accounted such. Indeed without one there could have been no Llangadock to speak of though not a vestige of the fortress remains. Probably it was of Welsh construction, as its records show little else but family fights. There were once nearly three thousand people in Llangadock. It presents from afar, like Llandovery, a Hibernian aspect, spreading along the green flats, with white as its prevailing colour mingled with faded greys

Carmarthen Vans from Trecastle.

and mottled splashes of pink. The guide-books call it a decayed town. Its look bears them out, and there are certainly nothing like three thousand souls there nowadays. The rivers Sawdde and Senni, both born in the Black Mountains, meet here and join the Towy close by, over which river the traveller may cross to the road on the further shore, if he be so minded.

In the wars of Edward I., however, Llangadock was not beneath the notice of the English, who burnt the town, gutted the church, killed the officiating priest inside it, and stabled their horses at the high altar. This last seems to have been a curiously popular method of completing the discomfiture of a fallen foe in the Middle Ages. Cromwell had some logic in perpetrating such outrages, but a superstitious popish baron, one might well imagine, would not have considered the fun worth the spiritual risk.

The famous country seat of Abermarlais now claims my pen; not for any physical attraction of its own, for if I called halt at every pleasing scene we should never get to Carmarthen, much less around south-west Wales. But a cunning old Welshman, who lived here in the fifteenth century, played such a trick upon a King of England's royal high Commissioner, that it has been the joy of story-tellers from that day to this.

Whether Griffith ap Nicholas was a man born to his commanding station, or whether he was something of an upstart, is a matter of no consequence here, as even historians dispute over it. At any rate, he was Griffith ap Nicholas of Abermarlais, "full of welth, an estate of at least seaven hundred a year, seaven strong castles, and seaven houses," above all, he was a terror to the owners of flocks and herds: at least, those whom he regarded as enemies. He was also grandfather to Sir Rhys ap Thomas, a still greater person than himself, of whom more anon. The year was about 1440, a favourable-period for the success of enterprising and not too scrupulous persons, and Griffith ap Nicholas combined these qualities to such a marked degree that he was much the most powerful magnate in Ystrad Towy. Com-

plaints of his high-handed proceedings, however, followed each other so fast to Westminster, that the Government sent down a commissioner, Lord Whittney, to look into the matter. Griffith ap Nicholas, who, like his famous grandson, loved pomp and display, even if he loved the black cattle of Pembrokeshire and the white, red-eared beeves of the English border still better, was equal to the occasion. For when the royal commissioner came down the pass into the head of the vale, he found Griffith awaiting him near Llandovery attended only by four or five ragged fellows mounted on sorry jades. His lordship was properly amazed to see in this mean-looking group the dread chieftain who had stirred the Government to formal action. With much humility Griffith conducted the King's envoy, whose destination was Carmarthen, to Abermarlais, where his son, Thomas ap Griffith, rode out to meet them with a hundred well-appointed men, and put a different aspect on the affair. Continuing their march down the vale to Dynevor, another son, Owen, swelled the procession by a further two hundred mounted followers. A still greater and not particularly pleasant surprise awaited Lord Whittney at Abergwili, where the eldest son of this aggressive family was drawn up at the head of five hundred horsemen, ready to join in the last short stage to Carmarthen, which they entered in triumph. His lordship, whose instructions were to arrest the cattle-lifting chieftain, was sumptuously lodged, though he was compelled to put up with the company of Griffith's three stalwart sons. He began to feel very uncomfortable, and to more than suspect that he had come on a wild-goose chase, though if there was a goose in the matter, it was certainly not Griffith ap Nicholas. No objection, however, was made to his privately interviewing the Mayor and Sheriffs. Why should there be, when all he could do was to read his commission and command these worthy burghers to arrest their formidable guest and neighbour? The interview, however, proved profitable to Griffith, and saved him, ultimately, such risk as there might have been in openly defying the King's

envoy. For the crafty and humorous Mayor, whose name also was Griffith, took particular notice that his lordship thrust the commission into the sleeve of his cloak, and informed his powerful namesake, with a twinkle in his eye, no doubt, of the significant fact. Then a great practical joke, though jesting was not its main object, was perpetrated in Carmarthen. That a King's envoy should be suffered to rest in the ancient capital of South Wales without showing him what true Welsh hospitality could achieve was not to be heard of, nor was there any cause for unfriendliness, at any rate, till certain formalities, which had been arranged for the next morning, took place.

So a great banquet was held, with a revelry quite worthy of the locality and period. The Royal Commissioner, so we are led to infer, went under the table like the rest, but to Owen, the son of the greater Griffith, was deputed the onerous responsibility of keeping sober for the job in hand. This was no less than the abstraction of the Royal Warrant from Lord Whittney's sleeve, and it was achieved, as may be readily imagined, without difficulty. Next morning, the High Commissioner and the civic authorities went, with much state and such dignity as their shaky nerves were capable of, to the Shire Hall, where the former, in the King's name, ordered the arrest of Griffith. There was no backwardness shown, either on the part of the magistrates or Griffith, since they were all in the secret together, and the height of the diversion was yet to come. When Griffith arrived, Lord Whittney at once arrested him in the King's name, upon which the accused, assuming a humble air, meekly begged the Court to have the commission publicly read, so that the affair might be completed in proper and formal fashion. His lordship, readily complying, then felt in his sleeve for the indispensable document and failed, of course, to find it there. Then "the Eagle of Carmarthen, the brooder over a hundred eyries," as an eloquent bard and contemporary, reared in the neighbourhood of Abermarlais, calls its strenuous owner, sprang to his feet in

assumed wrath and, clapping his hat upon his head, swore a great oath that made the whole Court shudder. As for Lord Whittney and his brother Commissioners, they were a pack of impostors, and he would hang them all that very day on Carmarthen walls.

His would-be judges now became his humble suppliants, and begged for leave either to depart in peace or to send for another warrant. The latter request was naturally not to be thought of, but the first was granted, though only on the humiliating condition that Lord Whittney assumed the Welsh chieftain's cognisance and livery; that he should return to the King's presence in that guise and wholly exonerate Griffith from the accusations levelled at him. No harm apparently accrued to the "bold Eagle of Carmarthen" from this little escapade, and with his after career we have no concern, and need only remark that it was chequered and lively, and terminated at the battle of Mortimer's Cross.

Carmarthenshire is almost wholly an agricultural, or, to be precise, a pastoral county. But its surface is so varied that to generalise upon rents and labour, crops and customs, would be impossible. Labour, perhaps, may be briefly dismissed as almost non-existent. In nearly all parts of South Wales this somewhat indispensable commodity is not merely scarce, but has disappeared altogether. The typical Welsh farmer, with a fifty acre, or in local parlance a "forty pound," farm, can scrape along without it. But in Carmarthenshire and about the Vale of Towy there are many large holdings whose owners twenty or thirty years ago were doubtless more than happy at having achieved such measures of consolidation. True, all tillage possible has been abandoned, but even with large dairy farms you must have labour, and I cannot imagine what these hapless "big men" do. The wealth and abounding industry of Glamorganshire quite overwhelm the rest of South Wales, and seem to suck the rural districts almost dry of labourers, and who can wonder? Everywhere in South Wales one sees

abandoned cottages falling into ruin in leafy hollows or gorse-clad hill-sides; quite often, indeed, in such romantic or sequestered spots, as the inconvenient dwellings are naturally the least sought after and the first to be vacated. The pathos, however, that attaches to a weed-covered hearthstone or a vanished roof-tree has not the direct significance it would have, let us say, in Tipperary. It is deplorable beyond a doubt that any portion of a lusty peasantry should vanish off the land, and still more so that land should go out of cultivation for lack of labour. But no tears need be dropped, or harrowing tales of eviction and starvation conjured up, at the sight of these abandoned cots, unless it be for the farmer who remains behind. They are not the signs of Welsh poverty, but of Welsh wealth. Their former inmates have not left the country, but merely stepped over the Black Mountains into the next county, where they can earn twice as much as the very respectable wages they had been already earning here; under much less pleasant conditions, to be sure, and very often in the bowels of the earth. But then, again, the hours are shorter and the social excitements more stimulating, if less wholesome, than a concert in the village chapel or an occasional county eisteddfod. Hundreds more cottages would doubtless fall into ruin in South Wales, if it were not that the emigrants to Glamorganshire often leave their wives and families in their native places, returning themselves periodically. From an economic and sanitary point of view this last arrangement has obvious merits, though it does not help the farmers in the very least. The small farmer is not so evident on the broad highways of the Vale of Towy as he would be in the byways of the hill country, and the dogcart is a commoner sight than the rough saddle pony. It is Herefords, too, and shorthorns, not black cattle, that are standing in the glistening shallows of the Towy, which sing beside us in their wide shingly bed, or subside into quiet salmon pools, quiet at any rate in these dry summer days, making mirrors for the greater glory of the summer woods that overhang them.

Radnor, and even Shropshire, sheep, shorn of their heavy fleeces, raise the dust of the highway, or press the meadows with lumbering tread, in place of the mountaineers we left upon the steeps of Abergwessin and Llanwrtyd. Most people know that goats once flourished abundantly on the Welsh hills, and that now they are practically extinct. The few yet to be seen are not survivors of the old Welsh goat, but utter impostors, miserable specimens as exotic as any that you might see in Surrey. The goats that we all know ran in panic from the mountains at the fiery shapes which heralded the birth of the Great Glendower were of a bluish-grey colour, and nearly twice the size of the few in evidence now. They were regularly bred till the close of the eighteenth century, when tree planting came into general fashion, an industry to which the goat is an implacable foe. It seems, too, that great numbers of the Welsh mountain goats ran practically wild, and could only be killed by stalking or running with hounds, and furnished a recognised and quite exciting sport.

Speaking of cottages and their inmates, I omitted to mention that since dropping down into Carmarthenshire, we have passed from a land of slate and stone roofs into a land of thatch. And not only that but Carmarthenshire, and still more Cardigan, boasts of the quaintest and most picturesque thatched cottages in the world. The first time indeed that you see a real old-fashioned Carmarthenshire roof, you stand amazed, the next impulse is to burst out laughing, the third to assume an attitude of unqualified admiration. The body of the house is generally one-storied, and, whether of mud or stone, brushed over with white or coloured wash, but the roof is a thing of joy and a work of art that throws the thatched cottages of Devon or Northamptonshire, the best of their kind known to me in England, hopelessly into the shade. I am thankful that illustration comes to my aid in this matter, for words do not well serve the purpose. I might remark however that it is the artistic

concealment of the chimneys in their braided sheaf of thatch, the billowy nature of the roof comb, and the neat roping of the fringes of gable, eave and comb, which gives the South Welsh type a distinction unapproached elsewhere. Fifty years hence there will probably be none left. To-day there are thousands scattered over Carmarthen, Cardigan and Pembroke, and in the course of our tour we shall go through

Llandilo—Morning.

whole villages mainly composed of these delightful and primitive habitations.

Llandilo, which derives its name from an old Welsh saint, St. Teilo, though better seen in approaching from the other bank of the Towy, has a look of the distinction that indeed belongs to it: for the vale narrows somewhat here, and the little town on the top of a high bluff, with its old church conspicuous in the centre, runs sharply down to the river and without any check leaps its now broad streams on an

extremely fine bridge of a single span. There is nothing further to be said about the town, which boasts, by the way, of a good hotel, and supplies, no doubt, one of the best neighbourhoods in South Wales with most of the necessaries and some of the luxuries of life. This somewhat emphatic finality in the matter of Llandilo's claims is necessary from the fact of its being overshadowed by the great seat of Dynevor, where the "Ravens of Rhys," which cost that famous house so dear in the days of Henry VIII., still haply flap their wings. And I use this last epithet advisedly, for who is there with a soul within him that would wish this noble perch, this ancient and defiant stronghold of the Kings and Princes of South Wales, to be in the hands of even the most distinguished and irreproachable of aliens?

And here again I feel so impotent! What can one say in a few pages of a place that for most of five hundred years—five hundred years of storm and strife—was the political and military centre of South Wales? One may loiter on the bridge, and look down the river to where a steep wall of blowing woodland clothes the mighty rock of Dynevor, or we may wander downwards for a mile or two and look back at this great historic headland, with the dark fragments of the castle peering through its leafy summit and the bright waters of the Towy stealing quietly round its base. In the lofty parklands above, where Lord Dynevor's mansion of Newton is situated, there is a wealth of glorious timber, such as travellers wrote of with admiration a hundred years ago. There are views too, up and down the Vale of Towy and away to mountain fastnesses beyond, that are not easily surpassed, and have inspired the pens of many writers of prose and verse both Welsh and English.

The great palace fortress of Dynevor, whose crumbling towers on the brink of the woody precipice we looked up at from below, was founded by "Rhodri Mawr," or Roderic the Great, about the year 870. This monarch justified his title by

uniting all the Welsh Princes under his sway, the one unerring test of pre-eminent ability in the stormy confusion of Welsh history. His position was strengthened by a numerous family of martial sons, who not only aided him in his successful wars against the Danes and Mercians, but cemented his hold over tributary Welsh chieftains by the only means then recognised —that of fear. He is generally regarded as the creator of the three distinct kingdoms of Wales, the clamours or the deserts of his sons being the motive of emphasising divisions which had some tribal and racial reasons for cleavage.

The three divisions of Gwynedd (North Wales), Powys (mid-Wales), and Deheubarth (South Wales) became permanent factors in Welsh life till the last fraction of independence vanished from each of them under the iron heel of Edward I. With North Wales and Powys, we have nothing to do here at Dynevor. It is difficult enough to give an English reader a notion of what South Wales really meant in a few words without bringing down on one's head the thunders of the expert who is privileged to revel in details without thought of space and to select audiences willing and qualified to absorb them.

But as to this matter of the kingdom of South Wales when the Normans first began to crumple it up, it may be fairly described as consisting of the provinces of Ceredigion, Dyfed, Deheubarth, Brecheiniog, Morganwg and Gwent, which almost corresponded to the modern counties of Cardigan, Pembroke, Carmarthen, Brecon, Glamorgan and Monmouth with the wild districts of Elvael, Melenydd and Gwrthreynion represented by Radnor. The boundary lines are not thus accurately represented either on the Powys or northern side, or towards England, but quite sufficiently so for present purposes. And, indeed, there were many stormy periods when those persons chiefly interested would have been most conflicting authorities on this thorny question. The modern antiquary has not to maintain his ink tracings with bow and spear. Each of these sub-provinces

had its princelets or reguli, but all theoretically owed allegiance to their overlord at Dynevor. How much they rendered depended wholly on the fear in which they held him. Glamorgan and Gwent seem to have had as little sense of reverence or fear for the eagle perched upon the rock of Dynevor as could well be imagined. The other districts were more respectful. Gwynedd however, or North Wales, was by old statute recognised as the paramount power, and when a capable monarch sat upon its precarious throne South Wales and Powys observed the form of that light homage which was his due.

This arrangement, so admirable in design, gave peculiar opportunities for the Welsh to indulge in the sport which above all others was their chief delight—that of war. For when the Saxon or the Dane, and, later on, the Norman, ceased from troubling for a time, there were still three rivals, ready at a moment's notice to leap at each other's throats. Or, if some strenuous personage, some Owen Gwynedd or Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, had insured a "triple alliance," by taking all three provinces in charge himself, there were always the petty chieftains of the south spoiling for a fight among themselves. When the Normans came into South Wales, with their castles and intermarriages and complex relationships, the fun grew so fast and furious that even the headiest Welshman had at times a little too much of it.

The mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter,
We, therefore, deemed it meeter
To carry off the latter.
We made an expedition,
We met a host and quelled it,
We forced a strong position,
And killed the man who owned it.

On Dyfed's richest valley,
Where herds of kine were browsing,
We made a mighty sally
To furnish our carousing.

Fierce warriors rushed to meet us,
We met them and o'erthrew them.
They struggled hard to beat us,
But we conquered them and slew them.

As we drove our prize at leisure
The King marched forth to catch us:
His rage surpassed all measure,
But his people could not match us.
He fled to his hall pillars,
And ere our force we led off,
Some sacked his house and cellars
While others cut his head off.

We there, in strife bewildering,
Spilt blood enough to swim in.
We orphaned many children,
And widowed many women.
The eagles and the ravens,
We glutted with our foemen,
The heroes and the cravens,
The spearmen and the bowmen.

We brought away from battle,
And much their land bemoaned them,
Two thousand head of cattle,
And the head of him who owned them,
Ednyfed, King of Dyfed,
His head was borne before us,
His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,
And his overthrow our chorus.

I think, perhaps, I should have spared my readers the full transcription of this delightful epic, if Professor Saintsbury, who ought to know, had not declared, in a notable essay, that it is one of the finest pieces of fooling of its kind in the English language. At any rate it is curiously appropriate, if somewhat irreverent, in this historic spot. Thomas Love Peacock, who rambled about Wales for a year or two in his youth, and found a wife in Carnarvonshire, certainly poked fun, in his cynical fashion, to some purpose at the humorous side of Welsh life, ancient and modern. It is not of the slightest consequence

that he knew very little of either. Indeed, this rather favoured his peculiar genius, and those who have not read *The Sorrows of Elphin*, and *Headlong Hall*, have a treat in store. A man who had almost lived with Shelley, and had been sufficiently his

Dynevor from Llandilo Bridge.

senior in years and experience to treat his enthusiastic socialism with cynical banter, must have been a "link with the past," indeed, to those who could still talk with him in the 'seventies, to which recent period his long life lasted.

But Dynevor, not Peacock, is our immediate theme, and the fact that the laws of Howel dda were deposited here in the tenth century is perhaps the most luminous event that followed the death of Roderic. Howel dda does not seem to have been in himself a very potent prince. He was a grandson of Roderic, and prince, or joint prince, of South Wales, or, according to some chronicles, and a popularly received notion, King or Suzerain of all Wales. But his exact position is of slight importance, since he undoubtedly gave to Wales the famous code of laws which bears his name. He summoned all the great men of the country, not, as would seem natural, to the banks of the Towy, but to those of the Taf at Whitland, and there, with infinite pains and much ceremony, was evolved the lengthy and elaborate code that may be read to-day in any reference library. Nor is it by any means, I might add, heavy reading, and there is nothing of that cloud of mystic words with which modern legislators love to envelop their enactments.

Whether Howel the Good was a great prince or not, there is at least no doubt about the lucidity of his legal draughtsmanship. Henceforward, if a Welshman thirsted for the blood of his grandmother, he knew exactly what her value was, and how many cows he would have to surrender for the privilege of knocking her on the head. Everyone was "priced," so to speak, from the King's chief bard to the humblest freeman, and there must surely have been something gruesome in knowing that your life was worth exactly twenty-four or twenty-nine cows, and not a farthing more, as you took your precarious walks abroad.

But the criminal code forms only a portion of this sporting document, and I use the adjective in no frivolous, slangy sense, for the rules of the chase, the close seasons, the manner of hunting each kind of game, the price of sporting dogs, and the way to handle them, are all included. The manners of those who take the field, too, are strictly scrutinised. Modern

masters of hounds may take note that their remote predecessors, when goaded to strong language by the misbehaviour of men or dogs, might only swear by their horn or by their leash. Then again, an immense price list, worthy of Whiteley or the Army and Navy Stores, was appended to the code. Whether you were on the look out for a shield, "enamelled with blue and gold," a pair of gloves, a coat, a battle-axe, a coracle, an apple tree, a cur dog, or a fur-trimmed mantle, this indefatigable monarch had decided exactly how much you were to pay. If the Welsh countryman was as fond of a little bargain then as he is now, Howel dda, by this blighting interference with free trade, must at the same time have deprived his subjects of a good deal of pleasure in life. But it was one thing to make laws in those days and quite another to carry them out. From this voluminous catalogue it may be gathered that the beaver—the afranc—was approaching extinction in the tenth century, since its skin was one of the most expensive articles upon the list.

Regulations are also laid down for the management of horses. They are not to be broken till their third year, while, with the passion for the figure 3 that distinguished the primitive British mind, that number of "rides through a crowd" was to be the proof of "warranted broken." There are laws too against cruelty to animals, and others enjoining hospitality, the nature of which Giraldus Cambrensis gives in his well-known picture two centuries later.

To us who are looking at this ancient seat of royalty, not the least interesting of the items set forth in these remarkable statutes will be the position of the civil officers about the Court. There was the "Bardd Teulu," whose duty was to sing the "Unbernnaeth Prydain," or "Monarchy of Britain," to the army before a battle, and again at the close of it, provided things went well, or there were any warriors left to form an audience. To have had an unpleasantness with this distinguished singer might have proved expensive, as he was rated at 126 cows. There was a Chaplain, a Steward, a Judge, and a

Master of the Horse, whose spoils in battle were defined and limited, while the perquisite of the porter was every billet of wood he could clutch off a load, as it went through the portals, with the hand that was not occupied in holding open the gate. There was a Court Crier of Silence too, whose duty was to slap the pillars of the great banqueting hall with a stick when the revellers exceeded, in his opinion, the limits of decorum, and to exact and enjoy such fines as he could collect for their breaches of good manners. The lowliest functionary of all was the Royal Footholder, whose duty it was to sit under the table and nurse the king's foot, and "scratch it when required." "This looks uncommonly like gout, for which lashings of mead and metheglyn must have been a rare irritant." The contrast between the active and profitable job of the "Crier of Silence," and that of a gouty king's Footstool, who had no chance of making ha'pence, but a certainty of getting many kicks, is suggestive.

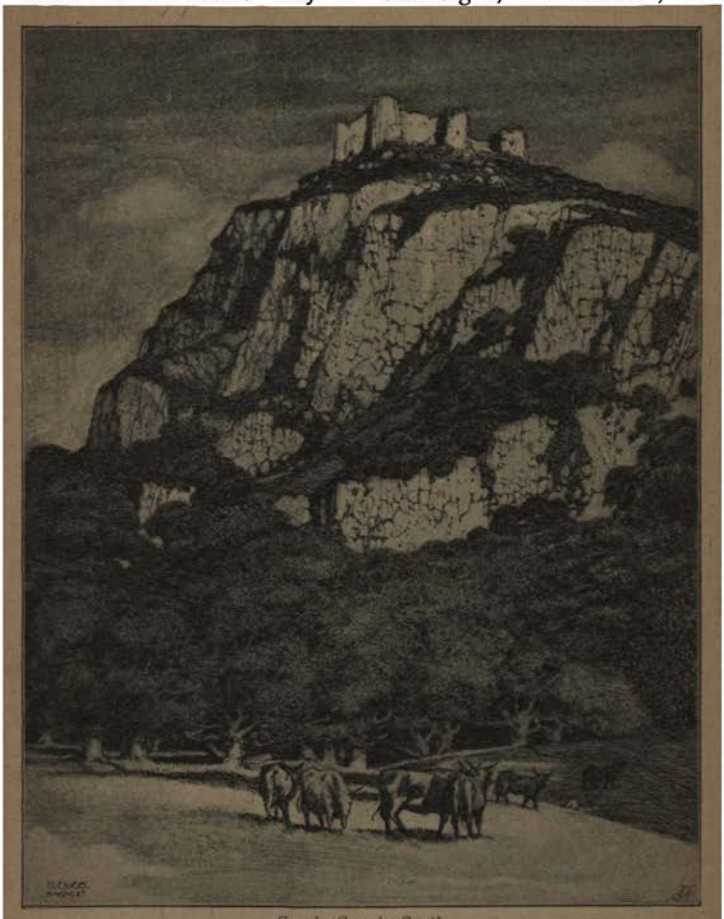
It is generally supposed that there were no stone castles worth mentioning in Wales till the Welsh learnt the art of building them from the Normans, which they did soon enough, and became in consequence a much more formidable foe than they had been at the first rush of the conquest. The Normans gained possession of Dynevor for a short time, and probably did the first stone work of the present castle, which was greatly improved and strengthened by Rhys and Meredith the sons of Griffith of the Royal South Welsh house whose family had regained it from the invaders. Henceforth, till that great epoch the Edwardian conquest, it was a recognised Welsh stronghold. Norman barons fought at times both inside and outside its walls, but only as participators in the fatuous internecine strife in which the native Welsh engaged. More than one mighty battle was fought on the banks of the Towy within sight of Dynevor, the most notable perhaps being that final routing of the South Welsh by Sir Edward Mortimer and the Duke of Gloucester in the campaign which witnessed the death of the last Llewelyn at Builth. When I have said that for a brief

time it was the centre of the last flicker of rebellion against Edward, namely, that raised by Rhys ap Meredith in 1287, and a little over a hundred years later stood out for long against the victorious legions of Glyndwr, I think that is about as much of its story as the reader can fairly be expected to put up with.

The A B C of English History is comparatively familiar. If you chance to remark that Edward II. slept here or Henry III. had his dinner there, everybody knows at any rate who you are talking about, and will bestow perhaps a passing glance of interest at the spot. But it would be impossible to awaken the curiosity of an Englishman, or of most Welshmen for that matter, in a castle by merely stating the fact that Griffith ap Rhys built it, or that Rhys ap Griffith pulled it down, when these individuals' names, though they were terrors in their day, have next to no meaning in ours. Each prince or warrior named there would seem to require a personal introduction, and this would be costly as to space, and not always lively in the narration.

Welsh history is full of nuggets, and teems with pathos, tragedy, and heroism, nor yet, as we have shown in this very chapter, is it devoid of lighter ingredients. But its complexity of outline and detail is calculated, I imagine, to terrify even the well-disposed Saxon reader who would roll along quite smoothly with the story of Sweden, Denmark, or Switzerland. And this is a pity, seeing that the story of Wales is that of a part of our own island and nation. It is not alone the battle, murder, and sudden death that rage and storm along the centuries, but they do so on the triple lines of Gwynedd, Powys, and South Wales, which again mingle with each other from time to time in such fashion as to make confusion seem worse confounded. Then there are those exasperating partnerships in government; even three brothers now and again making, or being compelled to make, the hopeless experiment, as if for the mere sake of illustrating the time-honoured adage of "the survival of the fittest."

Then come the sub-princes, the princelings, with their separate feuds and alliances: they of Glamorgan, for instance, or



Cerrig Cennin Castle.

Ceredigion, whose exact position was definite enough no doubt in theory but so vague in practice.

And into the middle of all this plunges the invading

Norman; here, seizing whole tracts outright which from the reader's point of view is quite a relief; there, building what might be called castles of observation on the inside edge of Welsh districts, and creating an indeterminate state of things that may well be the despair of any one attempting to fix in their mind a clearly connected outline of Welsh history. Very few people in the world, however, are called upon to accomplish a feat which would test the memory of a Macaulay, but that is no reason why the stir and romance of the story should not be enjoyed in fragmentary fashion or even a general idea of it acquired by visitors to the Principality. And after all this discouraging talk, it is pleasant to note that since I began this very chapter the long-awaited book which for the first time tells the tangled story of Wales, not only with authority, but in such fashion as to appeal to all readers, has at last appeared.[1]

Now from some portions of Lord Dynevor's park of Newton you can actually see the massive ruins of Cerrig Cennin Castle among the hills to the southward. But in no case should such a distant glimpse of one of the finest spectacles of the kind in the Principality suffice the traveller. You may walk the distance in three miles across the hills, the better method of approach, no doubt; or if on wheels you may take the smooth Llanelly road up the valley of the Cennin to Derwydd station, and then turn northward, with that noisy brook, and follow lanes scarcely smoother than its rocky bed till at a mile's distance the ruined fortress, frowning at you from the very summit of a naked cliff, breaks grandly into view.

For sheer uncompromising sternness Cerrig Cennin has surely no rival in Wales, since here the still imposing remains of an important Norman Castle are perched upon a rock some three hundred feet in height and almost precipitous on three sides. The river Cennin tumbles through woods in the glen below and hills that are even yet wild and a hundred years ago were very wild, indeed, roll away upon either hand and lose themselves

[1] O. M. Edwards' *Wales*.

in the chaos of the Black Mountains to the south and east. Dinas Brân, above Llangollen, is magnificent and twice as high, but you walk up to it upon turf. Harlech is matchless in its own way, but it is not quite the way of Cerrig Cennin, for upon the sea-coast you look for cliffs, and, in Wales at any rate, for ruined castles scowling from their feet or summits. But in the heart of these Carmarthen hills, lonely enough, but just here billowy rather than rugged, this great pile of rock, springing so sharply

Cerrig Cennin.

and so high to heaven and bearing on its pointed crown such a load even yet of hoary towers, fills one with amazed delight. Even in this hilly country, from miles away the grim pile stands out against the sky with a sublimity of outline and pride of pose that defies description. I well remember as a boy the impression made by those weird scenes with which Gustave Doré was then delighting the public, and his wonderful illustrations of *The Idylls*, and can vividly recall, not only the fascination which those mysterious aërial castles, shining

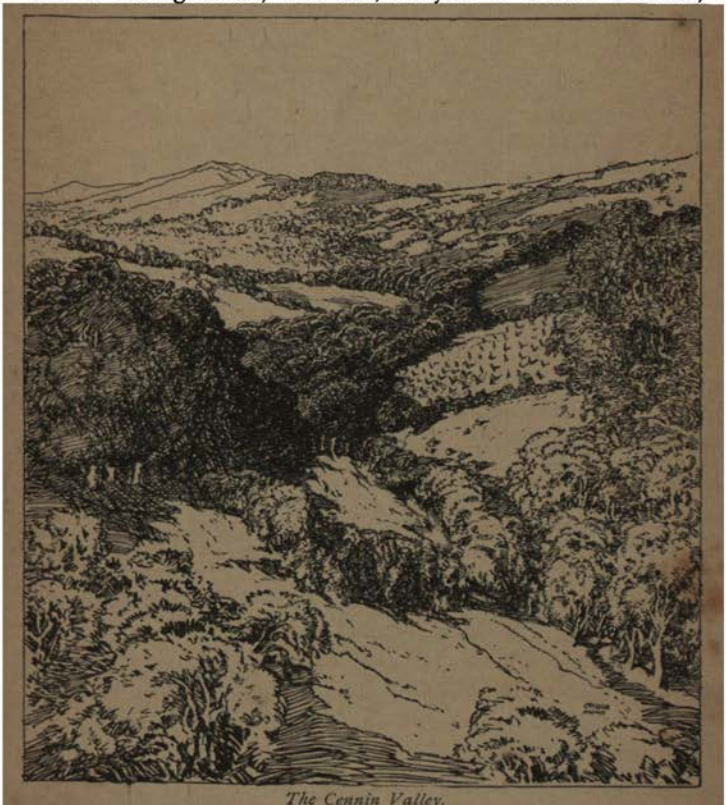
above gloomy tangled forests had upon one's youthful fancy, but also the sort of pang with which one felt that they were not of this world but of some far-off land of phantasy. Yet after all was not South-west Wales that dreamland? Some people say it was, as we know. At any rate, Gustave Doré's pencil and imagination never soared much higher than the actual Cerrig Cennin as it appears either by moonlight or against the wild sky of a summer storm.

How stimulating it is, then, to remember that this actually was the eyrie of a knight of Arthur's round table, one, Urien Lord of Is-Cenen. An old MS. in the British Museum, at any rate, states this as a positive fact! And who, indeed, in the spell of its presence would ask for further evidence? Moreover, old things have been found amongst the ruins that point to an occupation long before these Norman towers arose in the twelfth century. As for them, their stormy career was practically that of the surrounding castles, and the visitor will no doubt be thankful not to have his Arthurian dreams shattered by mediæval blood feuds.

> "Child of loud-throated war, the mountain stream
> Roars in thy hearing—but thy work is done,
> And thou art silent in thine age."

There is little enough but the sound of the stream to disturb the silence around Cerrig Cennin. And it is well we have struck here an Arthurian note, for almost in the line of our road back to the Vale of Towy is a cavern of no physical interest whatever, but famous all over South Wales for the legendary lore attached to it. For here, in the depths of Ogor Dinas, there are subterranean chambers where the heroes of old Wales are yet sleeping by their arms, and awaiting the time when the trumpet should call them forth to crush the enemies of their race, and quite unconscious no doubt that the time has long gone by. Logically the rise of Henry Tudor to the throne of England has made the potential efforts of these grim Rip van Winkles superfluous, and the spark of vitality within

their leathern frames should have flickered out on the night of Bosworth field. But it was long after the Tudor Kings had restored the self-respect of Welshmen, as I heard the tale told in Cardiganshire, that one, Dafydd of Bettws Bledrws,



The Cennin Valley.

near Lampeter in that county, stumbled on the secrets of this underworld on the banks of the Cennin.

This young man, having quarrelled, it seems, with his father, took a contract to drive some cattle to London. As he was

passing near Ogor Dinas, unconscious of any significance attached to the spot, he had occasion to cut a fresh stick, which proved so tough that he belaboured his black Cardigan runts with it the whole way to London, without any impression being made on its wood or bark. As he was sitting in a tavern, having disposed of his cattle, a stranger, eying his stick curiously, asked him where he cut it. And when Dafydd replied that it was in Wales, the stranger told him the very spot and the very tree it had come from, and, moreover, went on to say that weird things were to be seen underneath that tree, and as he was going himself to Wales, he would keep him company and show him something that would surprise him. So Dafydd and the stranger tramped back together, and when they got to the spot between Llandybie and Golden Grove, where the magic stick had so unwittingly been cut, the stranger went to the nearest farmhouse and borrowed two spades and giving one to Dayfdd told him to dig as he did. So they both dug and dug through the loose earth till the sun went down, and as night fell, they suddenly dropped through into a great chamber dimly illumined by some supernatural light. In the middle of the chamber, seated in an ancient bardic chair, was a man of immense stature serenely sleeping with his head upon his left hand. His right hand which was red, of the colour of blood, grasped a mighty sword, and at his feet lay a large dog, wrapped like his master in a death-like slumber. Round the chamber were stacked arms of all kinds, but mostly such as were used in periods long gone by, while a large table stood near the chair covered with gold coins bearing the superscription of the ancient Kings of Britain.

"This," said Dafydd's mysterious friend, "is Owen Lawgoch (Owen of the red hand), who has been sleeping here for hundreds of years, but will wake up at the appointed day and hour to claim and seize the throne of Britain. The weapon in his hand was the sword of one of the ancient kings, and it has

The Cennin.

never yet been drawn except to ensure a victory." Dafydd was strictly enjoined to touch nothing in the chamber. But the next day he found his way down there alone, and could

not resist pocketing one of the gold coins that glittered so uselessly by the side of the unconscious warrior. No immediate harm ensuing from this somewhat venial theft, the good Dafydd thought he would return again and help himself more liberally. But when he reached the spot next morning, all trace of the entrance had disappeared and his utmost efforts to discover the passage were baffled: and one can well understand that no mere human aid, did he seek any, availed him aught. Now the original Owen Lawgoch seems to have been the Yuein de Galles mentioned by Froissart. He was a great grandson of Llewelyn the Great, and was much the most distinguished among the few Welshmen who sought service in France after the final conquest of Wales. He held important commands both by sea and land against the English, and fought at Poitiers. His ultimate aim was to recover the Independence of Wales, to whose crown he regarded himself as the heir. Twice he started for England with hostile fleets, a French and a Spanish one respectively. Bad weather and bad luck were against him. In the heyday of his reputation, however, he was stabbed by an assassin in Spain, and does not seem to have quite his due share of fame among Welsh Immortals.

But the tradition of sleeping warriors is an ancient and somewhat widely applied one in Wales. Arthur and his knights, we all know, awaited their hour of triumph for centuries, asleep besides their arms in a cave in Gwent. Owen Glyndwr very naturally, both as a magician and a hero whose death was obscure, was vaguely allotted subterranean immortality of this kind, Glamorgan being, in his case, the supposititious scene of his long waiting for the right moment at which to reappear and lead his legions to victory and freedom.

Kidwelly.

CHAPTER VI

" Ever charming, ever new !
When will the landscape tire the view ?
The fountains fall, the rivers flow,
The woody valleys, warm and low ;
The windy summit wild and high
Roughly rushing on the sky ;
The pleasant seat and ruin'd tower,
The naked rock and shady bower,
The town and village, dome and farm,
Each gives to each a double charm
As pearls upon an Ethiop's arm."

THUS, nearly two hundred years ago, sang the poet Dyer on the very spot where our road, after skirting the bounds of Golden Grove, drops once more into the vale of Towy beneath that famous seat. We are here some four miles from Llandilo Fawr and on the road leading down the river to Carmarthen. Golden Grove has been a place of peculiar note for centuries. Earls of Cawdor have reigned there now for three or four generations. Before them were Vaughans, and the Vaughans of Golden Grove were very celebrated people, being, for a time, Earls of Carberry, and, among other things, conspicuous

Royalists in the Civil War. Indeed, the Earl of that day was the King's Lieutenant-General in South Wales, and a very active one, too. The House of Commons did him the honour to impeach him, in the curiously ambiguous phraseology of the moment, as being in arms against "the Parliament and *King*." But his lordship died in his bed after all, having served his master faithfully, though in the second rising of the Royalists he refused, like a sensible man, to stir. When Cromwell was on his way to assist personally in the reduction of Pembroke, he made a dash at Golden Grove, hoping to seize the arch-malignant in his lair. But the bird had flown, and was hiding in the woods, while the Countess, unwillingly enough, no doubt, entertained her self-invited guest to dinner.

There have been so many warriors of note in Wales, and so few divines and poets, that have become famous through the medium of the English tongue, that it is of Jeremy Taylor and John Dyer one is more apt to think as one passes into the shadow of the woods which wave so richly all over the lofty hillside where stands the present mansion of Golden Grove. Though finely placed, it is comparatively modern, the old house having stood at the bottom of the hill. Jeremy Taylor, who was Bishop of Down and Connor, an ardent Royalist, and Chaplain to King Charles, took refuge at Golden Grove for years during the Parliamentary *régime*, having found his way there after the siege of Cardigan, where he was taken prisoner. His second wife, a reputed natural daughter of the King, had a small estate—Llandinan—near Llangadock, but the learned cleric, with his family, found securer domicile in the household of the Earl, acting as domestic chaplain and teaching school at the little neighbouring village of Llanvihangel Aberbythych. Here he wrote several of his well-known works, and a spot better calculated to inspire the pen of pious scholar or of poet would be ill to find.

The vale below Llandilo narrows somewhat and gathers a new beauty from the headlands of hanging wood that rise

one behind the other from the rich carpet of green through which the Towy urges its crystal streams. Grongar Hill confronts the wooded slopes of Golden Grove and from its summit is the glorious outlook that has been made classic by Dyer's best known, perhaps only well known, poem. John Dyer was the son of a Carmarthen solicitor and was born about the year 1700 at Aberglasney, a mansion near the foot of Grongar Hill—and educated at Westminster. Misliking the law, he wandered about Wales, painting pictures, for which he had some gift—indeed he studied under Richardson and afterwards in Italy—and writing poetry which had some originality and freshness. He was rather before his time in his method of treating and writing of nature, and Wordsworth, it may be remembered, recognised something of a kindred spirit and addressed a sonnet to his memory.

> "Though hasty fame hath many a chaplet culled
> For worthless crowns, while in the pensive shade,
> Of cold neglect she leaves thy head ungraced."

But a "grateful few," the bard of Rydal continues, will remember Dyer "long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill." Pious pilgrims, however, to the Vale of Towy, few but select, do not fail to climb the soft breast of Grongar Hill, and there as they look far away up and far down the sinuous course of Carmarthen's lovely stream invoke the shade of the Aberglasney bard. Few of them perhaps bare their heads and sing in impassioned manner to an improvised tune the appropriate stanzas, as was the wont of George Borrow when paying his respects to the local genii. But every one who ascends the classic height will, I feel sure, be recalling some snatches of the poem that has given it such measure of fame as it enjoys, or they would not be there. At forty Dyer gave up painting and turned parson. He held one or two livings in the Eastern counties and died at fifty-eight. His wife was a descendant of Shakespeare. His last poem was "The Fleece"

and Dr. Johnson, who did not like either him or his verse, said he "would be buried in woollen."

We have hardly left the foot of Grongar Hill, which by the way, once carried a Roman encampment, when the fragments of Dryslwyn Castle, a mile or so down the vale, claim our whole attention. Perched on the summit of a steep outstanding hill, its feet are still "deep in Towy's flood," but its sides are no longer "clothed with waving wood," as in

Dryslwyn.

Dyer's time. Short turf, breaking here and there into outcrops of rock, now covers the three hundred feet or so of steep ascent on all three sides, and there is just enough of the ruined fortress left to make one of those imposing pictures with which South Wales abounds. That the castle was held mainly by the Welsh princes goes without saying, since it is in Ystrad Towy; but the struggles for its possession with jealous relatives or revengeful and ambitious foreigners were

as frequent and exhilarating as in any other focus of strife. By one event, however, somewhat out of the common, it is particularly remembered.

When Rhys ap Meredith, hereditary prince of South Wales, had virtually betrayed Llewelyn, with a view to getting better terms from Edward after the conquest, he encountered grievous disappointment. For he found himself under the rule of Edward's justiciary, Robert de Tibetot, his lands taken liberties with, his authority scouted, and Dryslwyn alone left to him. Edward was abroad and Rhys had no patience or no mind to wait for his return, but raised his people and seized every castle above Carmarthen. The Earl of Cornwall, the King's lieutenant with 24,000 men, largely Welshmen of the Marches, then took the field, but could do nothing against the Western Welsh behind their castle walls. It was now, while trying to capture Dryslwyn, that one of the towers, through unskilful mining, fell on a party of the besiegers, killing the Lord Stafford and many other valuable persons. Rhys after a chequered and injudicious career was eventually taken in arms three years later, carried to the King at York and dragged at the tails of horses to a traitor's death.

Upon the opposite side of the river, a little lower down, on a hill much higher than that of Dryslwyn, stands a monument to Nelson erected by Sir William Paxton, Mayor of Carmarthen, a hundred years ago, and purchaser of Middleton Hall, which lies just behind it. Nelson's indirect connection with South Wales through the Greville and Hamilton interests at Milford will be familiar to every reader of the great sailor's life. But I do not know whether personal association had anything to do with the pious erection by Sir William of this tribute to his memory from whose summit it is said you may discover seven counties.

But of much more immediate interest are the Middleton family, who once lived here. For the first owner, who bought this castle, was a brother of those two Denbighshire Middle-

tons, the Lord Mayor of London, and the one who founded the New River Company, to his own ruin, and to London's inestimable benefit, and the uncle to that stout General Middleton, of Chirk Castle, who did so much fighting on the Parliamentary side in the Civil War.[1] This Henry Middleton of Carmarthenshire, however, in the Civil War period, like the rest of the country, was a staunch Royalist, and appears in every local list of the King's friends at that time. These South Wales Middletons may have been affected by the change of climate. At any rate, they seem to have achieved no particular distinction. For I think the Captain Middleton who fought the Spaniards under Howard wrote poetry, and translated the Psalms into Welsh verse, and to crown all, so Carmarthen antiquaries say, shared the honour, with another Welshman, of smoking the first pipe in public in London, was of the Denbigh stem.

But we must hurry somewhat over the last four miles to Carmarthen, though scenes of interest lie so thick on every side, one would fain take example from the Towy beneath us, whose streams are already beginning to linger between their banks, and check their pace as the tide draws near. Galltfyrddin, or Merlin's Hill, must not be passed without mention, seeing that tradition places here the haunt of the great prophet and wizard, a gloomy cavern in the centre of a wood. Spenser, at any rate, has no doubt about it, and tells us how he made his abode:

> "Low underneath the ground,
> In a deep delve far from the view of day,
> That of no living wight he mote be found,
> Whenso he counseld with sprights encompast round."

But a brief stage beyond where the Gwili, after burrowing through the wooded gorges of North Carmarthenshire, slips over green flats to join the Towy, is the little village of Abergwili. Now Abergwili is a household word throughout South Wales, not because the first Llewelyn fought a sanguinary battle there, against a Scotch pretender to the throne of South Wales—a sort

[1] See *Highways and Byways of North Wales*.

of Perkin Warbeck—and overthrew him, but for the more conspicuous and assertive fact of its being the residence of the Bishops of St. David's. The white walls and Dutch looking gables of the palace[1] are a quite familiar feature to the passing traveller. And even as the train stops at the little station, there

Pont-ar-Cothi.

will generally be a sprinkling of parsons on the platform in their most orthodox attire going or coming from audiences, of a social or business nature, with their spiritual chief.

Abergwili has been the seat of the Bishops of St. David's ever since they abandoned their feudal life in their great Pembroke castles, or the magnificent palace, whose ruins help to

[1] Much of the palace has been consumed by fire since this was written.

make the stately cathedral on that far-away shore so unforgettable a spectacle. Many distinguished churchmen have played the host in this charming and old-world spot by the Towy's banks, the name of Thirlwall coming, perhaps, most readily to the mind. In the eighteenth century, and later, the Welsh bishoprics were regarded either as mere steps in the ladder of promotion, or as valuable sinecures for aged persons who had achieved distinction or good fortune elsewhere. In earlier times, their poverty put them in the first category. Later on, when the industrious attachment of livings to the Episcopal endowments, by acquisitive prelates, had made the Welsh sees valuable, meritorious or well-connected veterans were sent there to spend the evening of their days, in leisurely indifference to their uncongenial surroundings. But neither veterans nor ambitious juniors, as we all know, troubled Wales greatly with their actual presence between the reigns of Anne and Victoria, nor was any Welshman during that time elected to the Episcopate of his own church. The Bishop, with the *coterie* he introduced, parasitical, more or less, was regarded as a useful agent in the crusade against the Welsh tongue. Still more, political interest counted for almost everything, and Welshmen were not rich in this. It is indeed surprising that any church at all was left in Wales to start afresh upon. It would be a moot question which type of bishop was the most mischievous: the one who lived in residence and used the church revenues as a milch cow for himself and his relations, or the other sort, who seldom or never came into the country at all.[1] It is needless to say that there were exceptions, and St. David's had more than its share of them, as is only fitting for the largest and most important of the four sees.

Whether the Bishop of St. David's was a good man or not, he was always a very great one, and there must ever be a certain glamour about a diocese of such vast and varied character, such turbulent and romantic history, to say nothing of its superior

[1] For Bishop Watson of Llandaff, see *Highways and Byways in the Lake District.*

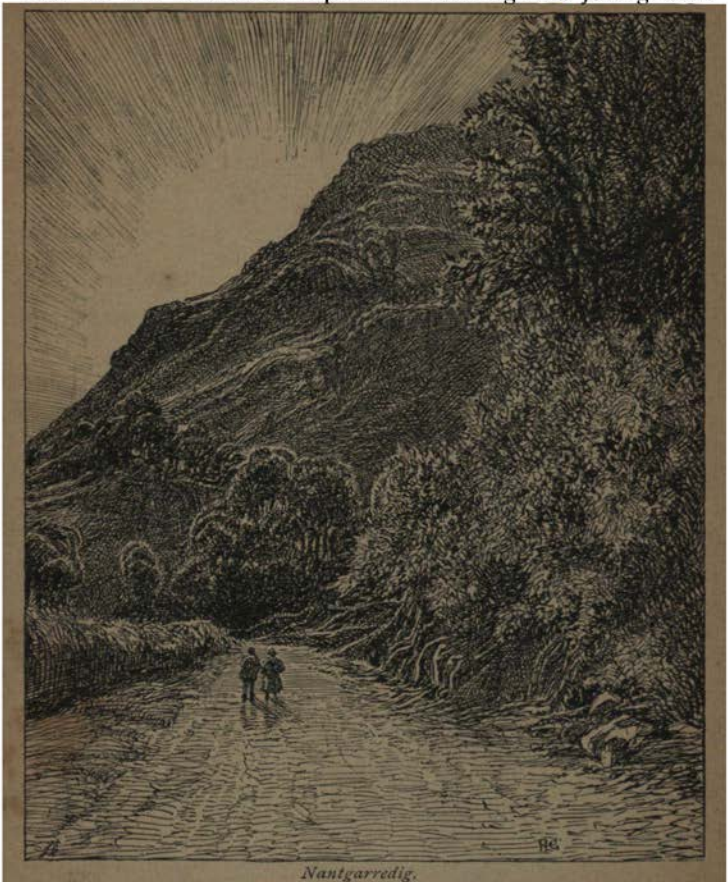
antiquity to all others, save its less striking Welsh neighbours. There was a collegiate church founded here at the Edwardian conquest, so that, in the words of its charter, "Ystrad Towy hitherto places of misery should be changed into places of spiritual joy." Archdeacon Bevan does not see why the withdrawal of the parochial clergy from their cures should benefit the people, but Mr. Willis Bund rejoins that he is not so sure there were any genuine parochial clergy at all, which shows we are bordering on contentious ground, and had better get on to Carmarthen as fast as we can.

Carmarthen, like Llandilo, is finely placed above the north bank of the Towy, which here becomes a navigable, though not greatly navigated, stream. It is a fine old market town, Welsh to the very core, and is beyond a doubt the capital of South-west Wales, the chief *rendezvous* for the people of Cardigan and Pembrokeshire, as well of its own important agricultural county. We may fairly say that it has been for all time—since the Normans broke up Glamorgan and Brecon, at any rate—the focus of South Welsh Celtic life. To drop into details, Carmarthen market was the last considerable stronghold in all Wales of the Welshwoman's beaver hat, which twenty years ago was a common sight there. Now, there is not one to be seen in genuine wear in all South Wales. Welsh is still the language of nearly every countryman who comes to Carmarthen, while the town is bilingual from top to bottom. A cheerier or more bustling agricultural centre on its two weekly market days or monthly fair could not be found in all Great Britain. A sturdy, rosy, good-humoured, and apparently light-hearted crowd it is, too, that swarms about the serried ranks of carts in the byways adjoining the spacious market-place, or clatters about the narrow old-fashioned streets, or trails up the steep slope under the castle walls from the station to the town. The "fifty-acre" farmer, to use a sufficiently descriptive phrase, who chiefly represents South Welsh rural life, makes a great show in local towns. If he has nothing to buy or sell himself, his wife and daughters will surely have;

and if individual exchange of values is limited, the current of business always seems to flow in these Welsh country towns with a bubbling and abounding life on market days impossible in a country of few masters and many servants on the soil. But at Carmarthen, among the mass of "little people," to apply a French idiom, there will be a good sprinkling of "strong" farmers, carefully hatted men, breeched and gaitered, and with smart traps in the inn yard, and large farms in the Vale of Towy or on the borders of Pembrokeshire.

There is certainly a great difference between the Welshmen of the south and north. Indeed, it would be strange if there were not, seeing that they have been always a separate people, have sprung from separate stocks, have fought each other much more than they ever fought as allies, and are conscious of, in some respects, a quite acute rivalry. Still, the difference of either from the Englishman is so great, and the bond of a common language—though a different dialect of it—and a common literature is so strong, one hesitates to regard them as two peoples. But no one with the most ordinary acquaintance of Llanrwst or Corwen, let us say, on market day could fail to be impressed by the contrasting light-heartedness and comparative effervescence of a South Welsh country crowd. Calvinism, beyond a doubt, has much changed the Welshman's habits, in the south as in the north, but in the former it has not affected his spirits to anything like the same extent. The temperament of the one no doubt yielded more readily to sombre influences than the other. It is well known that the bitterness arising from religious and political differences, which is unhappily a too common feature in Welsh life, is less marked in the south and that there is, generally speaking, a somewhat wider outlook and more sympathy with "ultra-parochial" matters. One may venture the impression, too, that all classes are more in touch in Carmarthenshire than in Carnarvon or Merioneth. The country squire, moving among the market people, will oftener, perhaps, get a greeting from his humble neighbours or ac-

quaintances that is much more than civil. And in the south-west he will be oftener capable of chatting and joking with



Nantgarredig.

them in their own tongue and in the fashion as easy between the classes in Celtic countries as it is difficult among Saxons.

It is not only fairs and markets, however, that enliven the good old town of Carmarthen. Sessions and assizes, county

and provincial business of all kinds, draw hither goodly numbers of country gentlemen, an element in which Carmarthenshire is fairly strong at all seasons. Church and chapel pour their delegates in from half a dozen lines of railroad to annual conferences. Educationists muster there in the interests of the intermediate schools, with which Wales is now so liberally supplied. Eisteddfods flourish, as they flourished here in the Middle Ages, and draw country choirs and local bards and bigger guns still to sing and spout upon the sacred ridge that bears the name of Merlin. Everybody in South-west Wales, I should imagine, who is not of hopelessly primitive habits, finds himself, at some time or other in the course of the year, at Carmarthen. That ancient hostelry, "The Ivybush," whose pleasant gardens look down over the windings of the Towy, has much cause for complacency. Few English tourists go to Carmarthen, though they hunt up scores of neighbourhoods not a quarter so well worth seeing. But if you should want a bed at "The Ivybush," it will be just as well to wire beforehand, lest they should all be occupied by one or more parsons, ministers, antiquaries, lay delegates, grand jurymen, educationists, otter hunters, or whatever particular sample of humanity happens at the moment to be attracted to Carmarthen by duty or enthusiasm.

There is not very much to be said of the town itself save that it is as quaint and old-fashioned a place as the modern demands upon it could well admit of. The Castle occupies one point of the ridge on which the town stands, but what is left of it—a couple of towers and the outer walls—is so obscured by the county jail that almost nothing can be seen of it from the town side, while the imposing ramparts, which still look boldly down upon the lower Vale of Towy, are so blocked with houses built against them as to spoil the effect. This should be remedied as opportunity occurs. As the same individual erected this necessary but melancholy edifice (the jail, I mean, not the castle) that built Buckingham Palace and the Pavilion

at Brighton, consideration for the feelings of antiquaries and the carcase of a mediæval castle could hardly have been expected. There is a monument, too, to General Nott, of Indian notoriety, in connection with the rescue of Lady Sale, at Cabul, and many valorous achievements, for which a grateful country applauded him and a grateful government knighted and pensioned him. He was the son of a proprietor of an older "Ivybush," and, ever loyal to his native town, returned there to spend the evening of his days. He now looks down upon his compatriots from the top of a granite pedestal, immortalised in bronze and clad in the garb of the first occupants of Caerfyrddin, to wit, the Romans, who had a station here. General Picton, a South Walian also, is commemorated, as is only right, in view of his still wider fame, in more conspicuous fashion by a lofty obelisk of granite. Picton's career is part of every-day history and needs no mention here.

Having already said so much about the early struggles that took place in the Vale of Towy, I do not think it would be well to catalogue—and space forbids much more—the scenes of strife that raged around Carmarthen town and castle in the centuries before and the years following the Edwardian conquest. Quiet pastures in the neighbourhood, as almost everywhere in Wales, still tell their tale of blood. There is the "field of vengeance," the "field of groaning," the "field of dying," the "corner of shouting," the "slope of battle." But Glyndwr was a great deal at Carmarthen: he burnt it and took the castle, and also suffered a repulse from a Pembrokeshire force, near by, at St. Clear's, just at the moment, the Shrewsbury people will tell you, he was sitting in an oak tree outside that town—and they will show you the oak!—looking calmly on at the defeat of his would be ally, Hotspur. At Carmarthen, too, Owen seems to have been himself impregnated with the clouds of superstition that had gathered round his name, for he took the trouble to send all the way to Gower, now in Glamorganshire, then a lordship peopled by Flemings chiefly, for a

notable soothsayer to read his destiny. The soothsayer proved a rank impostor, for he informed the great warrior that he would shortly be taken beneath a black flag. Such prophecies were surely most ill-judged. A favourable one, if right, could bring not only prestige but reward, and, if wrong, the subject of the oracle would be out of harm's way, snug in a dungeon or in another world. It is probable that the next time Owen came to Carmarthen, which was two years afterwards, with 12,000 Frenchmen in addition to his own people, the Seer of Gower made himself scarce, in a cave or some such congenial haunt of mysticism.

But the chief pride of Carmarthen beyond a doubt is its fine old church, dedicated to St. Peter, which stands at the upper end of the town. The above-mentioned Mr. Nash, of Carmarthen Jail and Brighton Pavilion fame, and of ill-omened date, 1785, appears to have worked his wild will on this ancient edifice also. He was not content, it seems, with obscuring the old roof with a plaster ceiling, after the fashion of his day, but he ground up many fine old relics, which had been brought from the Priory, that existed in this part of the town to mix with his materials, a sublime piece of vandalism even for the eighteenth century. This has now all been cleared away and the interior restored. It is a stately building, the product of various periods more or less remote, and worthy of an ancient town whose dignity and importance are so much greater than its mere size would suggest. It contains a large nave and broad south aisle, a north transept and two chancels, the latest portions of which are supposed to be fifteenth century. A large graveyard spreads all around it, where, under mantling leaves generations of citizens and country squires, of Davis', Griffiths', Williams' and Jones', sleep beneath a forest of tombstones. Quiet streets, or rows of low old-fashioned houses, straggle round outside this leafy sanctuary, and just at the end of the square a bishop of St. David's, Ferrars by name, went to the stake in Queen Mary's brief reign of terror.

But even to the stranger, if he have the requisite sympathy to go behind mere architectural externals, the monuments in these fine old country churches are, perhaps, their most eloquent feature, and there are several here to hold the attention worthily. Indeed, the greatest, the most potent, at any rate, of all Welshmen, since the days of Glyndwr, lies carved in stone with his lady on a sculptured block above their common dust at the south edge of the chancel, namely Sir Rhys ap Thomas, and I have a strong suspicion that most English readers will be no whit the wiser for the information. This is not, however, as it should be, for Sir Rhys was more forward than almost any British subject in the movement that placed Henry VII. on the throne and thereby set the seal on the Union of England and Wales. He was a grandson of that Griffith ap Nicolas of Abermarlais, whose high-handed proceedings with the King's Commissioners in this very town of Carmarthen I related in the last chapter, and who was killed at Mortimer's Cross. Sir Rhys's father, it seems, found his position too conspicuous for his taste and, like a contemporary North Welshman, perceiving that if he remained at home he would either have to kill or be killed by his relations, he migrated with his third son, Rhys, to the Court of Burgundy, where the younger man grew great in all the accomplishments of the period, physical, social and mental. His two elder brothers who had been left in charge at Abermarlais, took different sides in the Wars of the Roses and both fell. The father, having in due course gone back to Wales, was assassinated, just as he expected to be, and the younger Rhys inherited all the family possessions. With every advantage of wealth, talent and person, he soon took a lead in all South Welsh affairs. Richard III. grew suspicious of his influence and sympathies, and demanded his son as a hostage. But Rhys wrote from Carmarthen Castle to the King indignantly repudiating such suspicions, and vowing that any enemies of his Majesty who dared to land in Wales would only "make their entrance and

irruption over my bellie." But Sir Rhys, then, or very soon afterwards, was hard at work at Brecon plotting with the Duke of Buckingham for placing the Earl of Richmond on the throne. How it ended we all know. But only Welshmen as a rule remember that Sir Rhys was the foremost to meet Henry when he landed near Milford and that he lay down on the ground, or under a bridge, as some say, for the future king to step over his prostrate form, so that his conscience might be free of that vow to Richard which seems to have weighed upon it. It was Rhys ap Thomas who marched to Shrewsbury, gathering round him on his way nearly the whole chivalry of South Wales; Henry, with his Frenchmen, to save quarrels, taking a more circuitous route through Cardiganshire, the memory of which lives strong in Welsh tradition at every point.

The same tradition, too, holds that it was Rhys's stout right arm which struck down the fierce Yorkist King, and if this be true, it is a strange thing that when the bones of the great Welshman and his wife were shifted a few yards not long ago, that of the limb which dealt for Britain so decisive a blow was the only missing fragment. Henry knighted Rhys on the field of Bosworth, and regarded him henceforth as the maker of his fortunes, jocosely alluded to him on future occasions as "Father Rhys." Several more deeds of "derring do" were performed by the valorous Welshman on Henry's behalf, and on his sons', too, for that matter; and through the King's gratitude and his own brilliant parts, he became by far the greatest person in Wales, holding innumerable high appointments, owning twenty castles, and having the call, it is said, of two thousand tenants when the war trump sounded. But we shall hear of his social achievements, at any rate, in a subsequent chapter so we may dismiss Sir Rhys for the present, with the remark that the House of Dynevor, who still bear the Ravens of Rhys on their coat, are his lineal descendants.

It is a far cry from such a man as this to Steele, the famous dramatist and essayist, but their monuments are nevertheless

within ten paces of each other. The tablet in the wall to Sir Richard Steele is comparatively modern, but his bones lie within a foot of it in the vault of the Scurlocks. Steele's wife, "Dearest Prue," to whom he wrote the four hundred and odd notable letters, was, Mary Scurlock, and owned a nice little property at Llangunnor, within sight of Carmarthen. His wife predeceased him, but Steele himself spent the last few years of his active and chequered life with his children at Llangunnor and Carmarthen, dying in his own house, in King Street, in 1729. Though his health had broken long before, the late Mr. Spurwell thought, from concurrent evidence, that he had probably succumbed to an epidemic that visited the town very severely in that year. It would be ill forgetting, too, that Sir Lewis Morris, the most distinguished of living or recent Welsh poets, is a native of Carmarthen and resides in the vicinity.

The charter of Carmarthen is extremely old. The first was granted by Henry II. while in temporary possession of the district, and Carmarthen antiquaries are proud of the fact that Bristol was granted one, in which the Carmarthen charter was alluded to as a model. But I never think of the civic dignities of Carmarthen without recalling a scene out of that valuable and humorous work of Mr. Thomas Dinely, who in 1684 accompanied the Duke of Beaufort on his famous progress through the Principality as Lord President of the Council of Wales and Warden of the Marches, and described the proceeding in detail with numerous illustrations. It is a classic of course with every Welshman interested in the somewhat scanty record of that period and Mr. Thomas Dinely had no intention whatever of being funny. Indeed, it is the ceremonies he describes, perhaps, rather than his method of telling them, that strikes a modern as so delightful. When the Duke and suite, with the state and pomp of Royalty, arrived at Carmarthen—they had been a long time on the road and had engaged in many functions. They had started from Worcester, a county then under the jurisdiction of the Court of the Marches, and,

after a grand service in the Cathedral, were escorted by militia and the mounted gentry of the county as far as Ludlow. In due time, after an immense amount of eating, drinking, speech-making, volley-firing and militia-inspecting, the Duke and retinue arrived on the borders of Carmarthenshire, away up at Trecastle beyond Llandovery. Here he graciously dismissed the loyal gentry of Breconshire, who had ridden with him so far, and found the squires of Carmarthen, with the High Sheriff at their head, waiting to do the honours of the old land of the Reeses. In due course the dazzling pageant reached the gates of Carmarthen, and the Mayor and Councillors of the ancient borough prepared for the honour which, in spite of the bravery of gold chains and scarlet gowns, would seem from their language to have been almost greater than they could bear. Carmarthen, they informed his Grace through their spokesman, might seem the meanest of his places, but nowhere were the hearts of the people filled with greater veneration for his person and admiration for his perfections. Hitherto, said these awe-struck citizens, they had worshipped at a distance, as the Israelites did the mount, now however they were privileged to do so face to face. But their joy, they declared, was not wholly expended on his Grace, since there was some to spare for the noble son who was heir to his "incomparable virtues." The Duke was by this time no doubt long past blushing, and they continued to tell him how distressed they were at being unable to fitly entertain so illustrious a person—which was surely false modesty in the corporation, who had made Lord Whittney, the King's Commissioner, it will be remembered, so royally drunk a couple of centuries before, and helped to send him home with a flea in his ear as well! Still they were loyal; they could swear to that, at any rate! Indeed, the very tombstones of the Vale of Towy spoke eloquently to Mr. Dinely and the Duke, as they came along, of the attachment of its people to the house of Stuart. The chronicler of the expedition records in full one of these touching assurances:

"Under this thing
Lyes John for the King,
Who in truth and verement
Did hate the Parliament,
But as to the blood ryall,
He is as trew as a sun dyall."

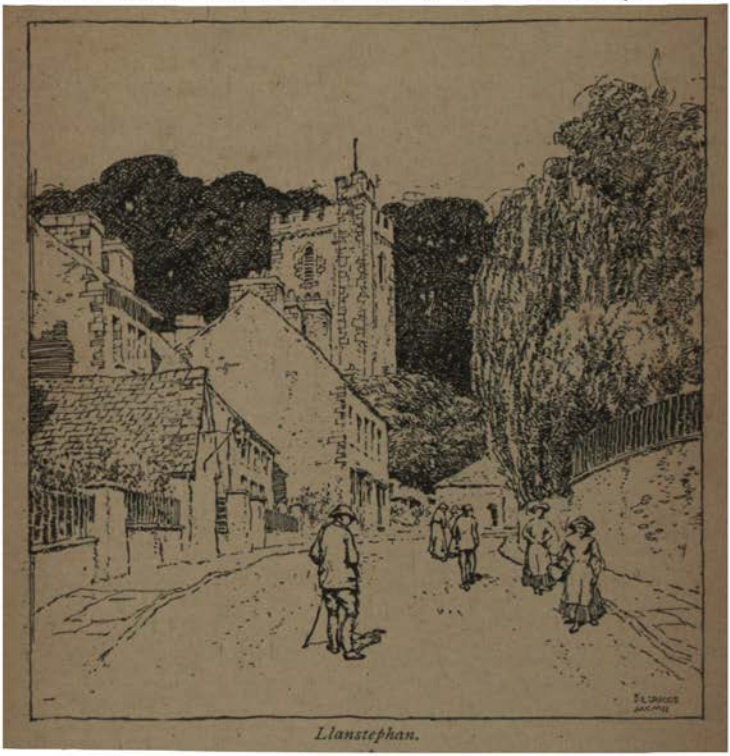
So, too, beyond a doubt were the eloquent men of Carmarthen. "We have been through the poison and infection," they continued, "of those treasonable doctrines which in time of rebellion, like the frogs of Egypt, overspread the land round about us, but could not corrupt or blast our vineyard. So good a soyle never gave birth to any such monstrosity as a Sequestration or a Committee man. Those Boars of the forest invaded it with design to propagate their kind. They sowed their tares amongst our wheat and watered them with our blood but (maugre that) the nature and virtue of our soyle had so incalculable an aversion to malignity of the seed that it never gave them any return." The address, from which this is but a brief extract, concluded with a "humble petition" to the great man to regard Carmarthen with an eye of favour. A Duke in those days was, of a truth, a Duke indeed! But the leal subjects of Carmarthen had yet a week in which to order the Duke's dinner. For his Grace went on almost at once towards Haverfordwest with High Sheriff, militiamen, and an immense cavalcade of gentry—the bells clanging them "au revoir." At Robestone in Pembrokeshire, Mr. Dinely tells us that, though extremely hot, the people had lit a bonfire in the middle of the road, which was quenched, however, by the fierce rays of the sun, giving forth nothing but a smell in the Duke's nostrils, which caused some, says the Chronicler, like good Welshmen "to versifie." In Cardiganshire they found "the vulgar to be miserable and low as the rich were happy and high." But by this time Mr. Dinely's standard of comparisons appear to have been somewhat infected by the long spell of good cheer he had enjoyed. For his compassion of the peas-

antry seems to have been mainly called out by the bad quality of the beer they drank, while the gentry, he declares enthusiastically, "had claret plenty and good at £5 a hogshead, beside choice wine of their own making from raspberries grown on the mountain." But what pleased him most in the Cardiganshire squires was their punch, "which they make to a miracle." When the Duke and his gay train returned to Carmarthen, Carmarthen was ready for them, "the conduits of the town ran claret," the Mayor and Councillors were in their scarlet robes again, and after the Duke had proposed and drunk the King's health, the toasting and clamour were so prodigious and prolonged as to utterly drown the greatest efforts of his Grace's trumpeters. Bonfires flared in the streets and as the night grew old and fuel scarce the enthusiastic citizens had so warmed to their work that they flung their very hats, coats and canes into the flames to feed them. To cut the story short, which will be just as well, Carmarthen made a very hot night of it indeed on August 20th, 1684.

Down on the flat near the Towy there is quite a colony of fishermen, who ply their trade in the lower reaches of the river, in the old Welsh fashion, from coracles. A dozen of these men carrying their tarpaulin and wickerwork boats on their heads down the street, present quite a unique picture, particularly when travelling from you in a row. With nothing but their lower extremities visible, they look for all the world like a group of prehistoric monsters, mammoth tortoises on their hind legs, for choice. There are yet more primitive people in Carmarthen, however, than these successors of the ancient Britons, and much less well-behaved ones. For a certain rough element seems always to have found a footing here at the bottom of society. A policeman entertained me once for some time with the biographies of a group of unkempt gentry who were sunning themselves before the door of a publichouse. One of them, an Irishman, of course, had just emerged from

his fifty second incarceration, so I was informed, while the rest had not much less cause to blush for their innocence.

A remarkable character, too, passed away the very last time I was in Carmarthen, and at an advanced age: one



Llanstephan.

Anderson, alias Evans, who lived out in the country near by. This old gentleman, for he was of respectable family and private means, if the exhaustive obituary notices in the local papers are correct, had consorted all his life with prize-fighters and hangmen. At home he was merely a hermit of prodigious

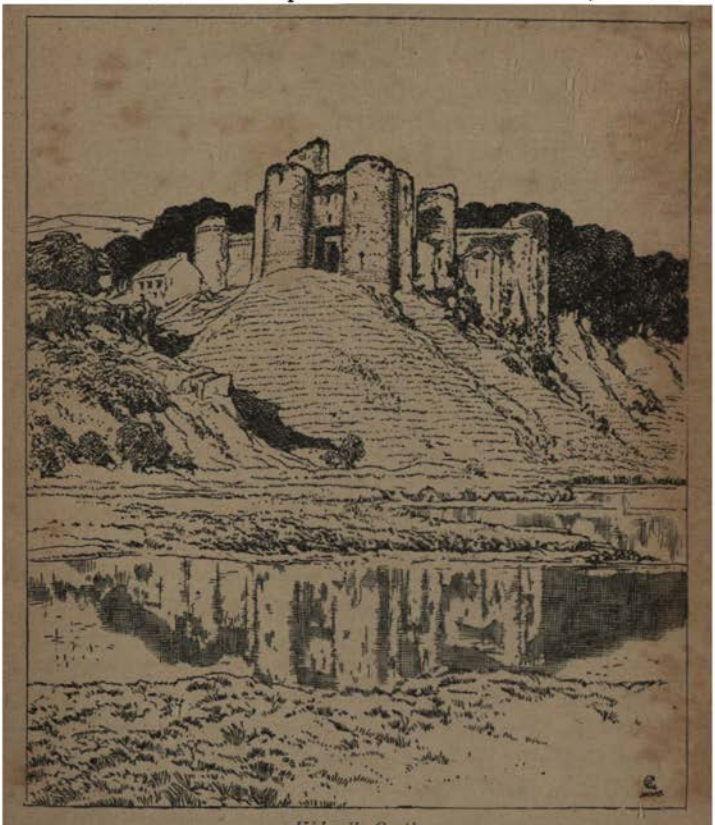
eccentricity. But his intimates had been sought out with consistency and deliberation from these two classes. With all the great prize-fighters of former days, he had been on close terms, and, indeed, he figures in the well-known picture of the great fight between Sayers and Heenan, while the first-named hero used to stay at his house near Carmarthen. But such a proclivity is not unique and would alone be unworthy of notice. It was Anderson's mania for the scientific study of capital punishment, and the fascination which executions and executioners had for him, that really made his name. He was continually experimenting in this gruesome art, and kept at one time a gibbet on his lawn upon which lay figures danced to his pulling. Sometimes, it is said, he persuaded friends or acquaintances to offer themselves as subjects for these fearsome experiments; and, practical joking being another hobby of this strange person, I can very well believe the story to be true that one of his victims nearly suffered a criminal's death before his host could extricate him or cut him down. He was a well educated man, and a great deal of correspondence passed between him and various Home Secretaries as to improved methods of disposing of criminals. He went to most of the executions in Great Britain in the private capacity of "Hangman's friend," and his most precious treasures were bits of rope or pieces of gibbet that had done duty on famous criminals. It is hardly surprising that on certain occasions, when the Calcraft or Marwood of the day were, from some emergency, unavailable, it was whispered among Anderson's Carmarthenshire neighbours, that the enthusiastic amateur had stepped into the breach. He offered his services repeatedly to the authorities. He was on the scaffold and shook hands with the "Manchester Martyrs" after their caps were on, and the Irish of Carmarthen hearing that he was mixed up in the execution were so threatening he had to avoid the town on his return. He revelled too in practical jokes, some of which, according to the obituary notices of this strange old

gentleman, were worthy of Twm Sion Catti himself. His great crony was an eccentric physician of his own age from Glamorganshire, who dressed from head to foot in foxskin, with the hair outside, and I have myself seen a photograph of this extraordinary couple.

No one at Carmarthen with a day to spare should fail to run down to Kidwelly on the sea-coast, as its old castle is among the finer ruins of South Wales, and played a great part in its time. For those who prefer the highway to the train the distance is but nine miles, with good enough road for the cyclist, though irritating in its gradients. For though the south-west corner of Carmarthenshire is but hilly, without an approach to mountainous, the Kidwelly road, by what appears a quite superfluous hunt after the highest ridge in the country it can find, manages to give the traveller something like a four mile steady climb with of course a corresponding facility of descent on the seaward side. And a very striking sight Kidwelly presents as you come down on it, lifting its huge walls and towers above the surrounding foliage, the tall spire of the church springing up close at hand, the wide meadows and marshland stretching to the strips of yellow sand dunes and the blue sea beyond. Kidwelly is a decayed town with a Mayor and Corporation still, I believe, in existence. But for most people it is of interest only for its noble ruins, which crown an eminence and look down on the streams of the Gwendraeth lapping its base. The little town was once walled as well as the castle, and the grim memories of defence and defiance, mute as they are in the many great towers and massive curtains springing from the summit of the steep green slope, and in the moss-grown blocks of fallen masonry, still seem to dominate Kidwelly, and thrust out of sight or mind its sleepy existence as a modern community.

Some sort of a castle had done duty here from the first Norman incursions, but it was not till the final struggle, in which Edward, first as Prince, then as King, determined to crush

the Welsh once and for all, that the fortress, whose ample remains are now before us, was erected with all the skill that palmy age of feudal architecture was capable of. The former castle, whatever



Kidwelly Castle.

its defensive qualities may have been, was the scene of constant strife, and was conspicuous in having witnessed the butchery, as a prisoner of war, of a valiant and noble lady who, in her husband's absence, had led his forces in person to the field.

Maurice de Londres, the Norman owner in the twelfth century —for the old Fitzhamon conquest of Glamorgan extended thus far—was perpetrator of the shameful crime, and Gwenllian, wife of Griffith ap Rhys, then Prince of South Wales, was the victim. In a battle fought in the open outside the Castle the Norman proved the victor, the Welsh were defeated and the Princess captured. What evil feelings of revenge prompted Maurice de Londres to cut his fair captive's head off I do not know. Perhaps, after all, he was no worse than the Tudor monarchs, who sent the heads of many comparatively harmless ladies flying, as we all know. But they and their advisers are almost condoned, while the name of de Londres is held in everlasting execration. It is very certain that Gwenllian, from the de Londres point of view, was a very troublesome person, much more so than Lady Jane Grey or Anne Boleyn could possiby have been; de Londres, too, was a monarch in a small way, with strenuous political methods like the others. In private life, he may, very likely, have been quite a pleasant fellow, if you did not cross him.

A dark legend, too, belongs to Kidwelly, and I am sure most people like legends better than facts. The period was rather later than the Gwenllian incident, and a Welsh chieftain, either by marriage or arms, had become possessed of Kidwelly. His name was Elirdir Ddu, and he had two sons, Griffith and Rhys, and a beautiful daughter, Nest. Besides these, there was an orphan niece, Gwladys. Now Elirdir was bound for the Crusades, and, taking with him his younger son Rhys, he left the elder Griffith in charge of the castle and its inmates. The castle proved an easier charge than the two women; for peace, wonderful to relate, was having a brief reign in South Wales at that moment, and with peace came time and opportunity for love-making.

Now at Margam, still a noted country house in Gower, there then lived one of the Mansel family, Sir Walter, young, handsome, and gallant, like all the gilded youth of those days. He

Kidwelly Church

had conceived an affection for the fair Nest, which was reciprocated, but the lord of Kidwelly was a Welshman, and Sir Walter a Norman, and though the racial prejudice was not insuperable, as we know, still it counted for much, and Elirdir forbade the young man the house. But when this unfeeling parent had taken himself off to the Holy Land, the still sanguine lover, though he could not visit at Kidwelly, where the elder brother still kept guard, could readily find means of meeting the fair Nest in the country round, and many stolen interviews were held. Unfortunately, Gwladys also entertained a passion for the Norman lady-killer, in her case, of course, a hopeless one.

But her senses were sharpened by jealousy, and she soon discovered that her cousin was keeping secret assignations with Sir Walter. Now, to complicate matters still further, Griffith was in love with Gwladys, and this crafty maiden, who had snubbed him hopelessly, now thought to use him as an accomplice in her revenge. So, flattering his hopes with feigned kindness, she unfolded her tale of Walter and Nest, and wrought him up to such a pitch of fury that he agreed to join her in a dark scheme of vengeance against the Norman.

An evil ruffian about the castle, one Merig, was now sent for, sworn to secrecy, and given his instructions. The next trysting place of the lovers was, by some means, ascertained to be a bridge over the tidal portion of the Gwendraeth. And as Sir Walter came forward to greet his ladylove, an arrow whistled from a reed bed and pierced his side. The villain Merig then rushed from his hiding-place, and before the eyes of Nest, hurled Walter's body into the rushing tide. The young woman, overcome with horror, flung herself after her lover, and they were both washed downwards to the sea. Their bodies were found by fishermen, and Griffith and Gwladys concocted a tale of accidental drowning. There were those, however, who had seen the arrow wound near Sir Walter's heart, but they were very poor people and durst not whisper of it. Griffith now asked Gwladys to marry him, but she turned from him with little logic

and much scorn as a murderer. Then Griffith, in despair, followed his father and brother to the Holy Land, taking the villain Merig with him. Both Elirdir and Griffith fell fighting the Saracens. Rhys, however, returned and married Gwladys, whose brain, tortured by remorse, gave way entirely when sinister rumours got abroad that a white spectre was seen at nightfall hovering about the Pont-y-Gwendraeth, and on being approached vanished, with a piercing scream, into the dark waters of the

St. Ishmaels.

river. At any rate, the bridge acquired the name of Pont-yr-yspryd-Gwyn, "the bridge of the white spirit," and bears it, I believe, to this day.

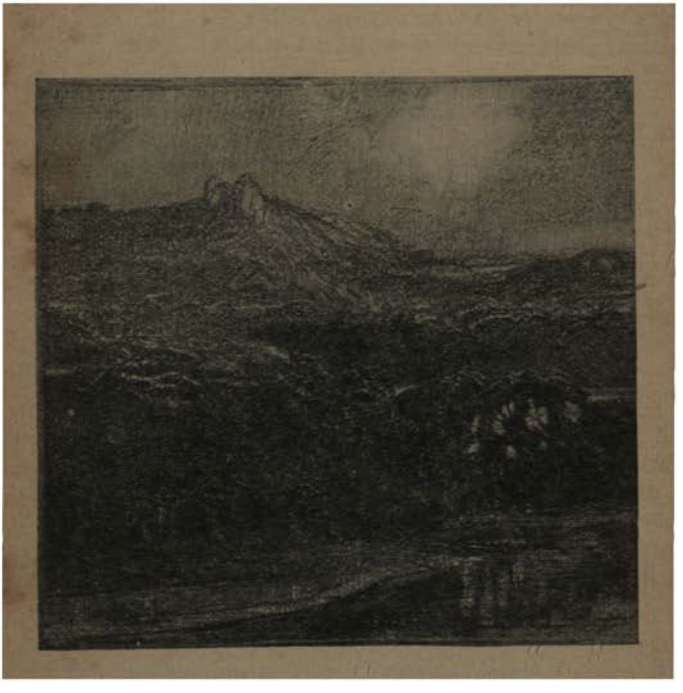
Now the person who is fortunate in having the command of a cycle, and is able to make a normal use of it, need not tramp or drive back again the same road to Carmarthen after a sufficient inspection of Kidwelly, nor need he hang about waiting for slow trains, but he can sail along a pleasant coast road, between the hills and the marshes, to the mouth of the Towy.

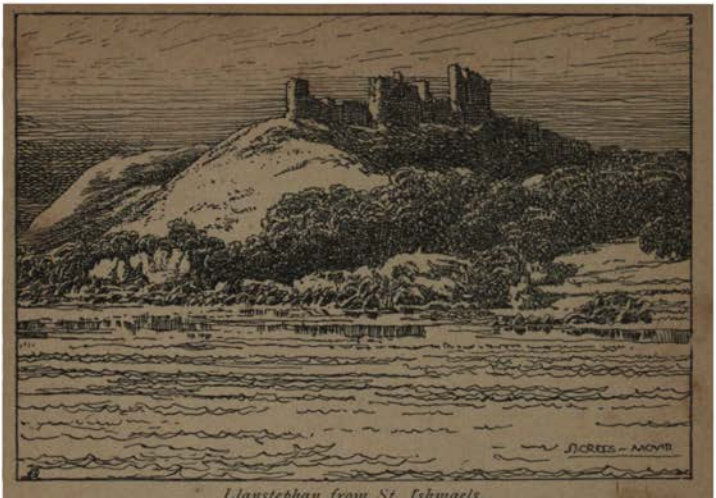
Thence he may look back eastward and see the great humpy promontory of Gower, full of its Flemish blood, its curious old world ways, its ancient buildings, thrusting far out into the Severn sea. Or he may look westward, over the broad shining tides and sands of the Towy estuary, and away over the mouth

Llanstephan Castle.

of the Taff, and see cape beyond cape fading into the dim seas that wash the iron coasts of Pembroke. He may stop if his fancy turn that way and have a look at the quaint church of St. Ishmael, thrust as it were right on to his track by the sea shore, or he may cross the estuary at the little watering-place of Ferry-

side, and admire the ruins of Llanstephan Castle, lifted so high above the waves. Thence he may ride, by easy stages, over a rolling country, along the further shore of the Towy to Carmarthen, and will have had a day that, if the elements be kind, he will remember as not the least enjoyable of those spent in exploring the shy charms of South Wales.





Llanstephan from St. Ishmaels.

CHAPTER VII

Now there are various ways of crossing that northern block of Carmarthenshire lying between the parallel valleys of the Towy and the Teify, the last of which divides the county from the shire of pigs and parsons, whither we are bound. We might, if so disposed, take the railway from Carmarthen, and at a somewhat measured pace pursue the tortuous oak-clad gorges of the Gwili till we reached the aërial junction of Pencader at the parting of the ways. Then, by continuing to sit tight, we should find ourselves hurtling down the mountain slope to Llandyssil on Teify side, and thence running placidly along the river bank to the G.W.R. terminus at Newcastle Emlyn. But if Lampeter, as is now the case, or Aberystwith, were our goal, we should alight at Pencader, and place ourselves with resignation at the disposal of the Manchester and Milford line, so called because it has not the remotest connection with either of these famous places, but consists merely of some forty miles of single track devoted wholly to the local interests of Cardiganshire. Both

in its rolling stock and primitive habits, the M. and M. has all the characteristics of a rural monopoly, and a be-thankful-you've-got-a-railroad-at-all sort of air about it. If the sole official of a wayside station with a four-jointed name is fast in a salmon in the pool below when the morning train is due, who would grudge a little delay in so good a cause? With more reason perhaps you may wax fretful when an already tardy train settles down for five minutes' conversation beside a sentry box of a station devoid of passenger life; but if you are a wise man you will cultivate philosophy on such occasions, unless indeed you are prepared to get down and walk.

I do not propose, however, to take the reader to the Teify Valley by the Manchester and Milford, but by road, and of these there are several choices. The ordinary Carmarthen route to Lampeter, for instance, starts northward from Abergwili. Or again, if time were ample, I should go higher up the Towy still, to Nantgaredig, and thence up the ever-charming valley of the Cothi, and, keeping more or less within sight of those limpid streams which the sewin love so well and wisely, pass through Brechfa with its snug fishing inn, and so, by Llansawel, to the most eastern road of all. But being somewhat pressed for time, or rather space, we will retrace our steps, by train or otherwise, up the Vale of Towy again to Llanwrda, whence the best of all these roads, and not the least attractive, traverses the twenty miles of pleasant country that here divides these two arterial valleys.

In such case, however, we must not linger at Llanwrda with its yew-shaded churchyard, but set our faces northward at once for Lampeter, which, to be precise, is eighteen miles, and ride steadily up the easy, though continuous, slope that follows for many miles the wooded windings of a noisy brook. Overhanging hills, grassed or timbered to their summits, shut us in. Narrow strips of meadow twisting about our road are still fragrant with uncarted hay. The delightful cottages of Carmarthenshire,

with their low, bright coloured walls and vast hoods of braided thatch and bee-hive chimneys, peep out of glens all bright with twinkling leaves and dancing waters and banks of flowers. Few but the children, and they in somewhat halting fashion, speak English in these sequestered glens, in spite of the coach road and the telegraph posts before their doors. It is quite strange to push out on to the watershed, where, from a wild common over whose golden gorse-brakes the larks are singing

The Cothi near Pumpsaint.

cheerily against a vast expanse of sky, we may look westward over nearly the whole of North Carmarthenshire. On the one side, we can see the hither walls of the Teify Valley and even get a peep of the Cardigan hills beyond. On the other, to the southward, we can track the shadowy course of the Towy. In the wide space between a landscape full of varied features, soft and bold, rich and barren, and teeming with the rural life of Celtic Wales, flickers in the cloud and sunshine of a breezy summer day. Ranges of hills, respectable in altitude but no-

where quite suggesting mountains, twist about amid the rich and rolling expanse, getting their heads, at times, quite high enough to shake off the trammels of fenced or walled enclosures. Here and there, they even put on a cap of russet, soon to blossom into purple, where a sufficient sprinkling of grouse maintain themselves to give some local reality to the twelfth of August. And through the centre of the breezy, billowy picture, the Cothi winds its sinuous course, to be readily marked, where not wholly hidden in the trough of hills, by a deeper colouring, as woodlands thicken and meadows fatten, where its streams are near.

To top such airy heights as this upon a highway is but to fall with greater speed into the depths again upon the further side, and, as we run down towards the Cothi, a lateral glen opens on the right, and shows the village and ancient church of Cayo, with its massive grey tower standing conspicuous against a background of hills at the head of it. "Cayo, which I love like a beaver its festivities and its music, a paradise containing everything necessary to man." This was the opinion of the celebrated poet, Lewis Glyn Cothi, who, as his name implies, was a native of the district, and flourished about four hundred and fifty years ago. Cynwyl Gaio, or Caio, the vanguard of Caius, seems to be the derivation, and one well supported by the strong Roman connection. Another mile or two brings us to the stream itself, where it may be said to break out of the mountains, and, mingling with the Twrch, begin its more serious career; for all this time we have been brushing the south-western outskirts of the Ellineth wilderness with our right shoulders.

Here, at the hamlet of Pumpsaint (or the five saints), a mass of woodland mantling on the adjoining hills, an avenue of ancient oaks, and a strip of richly timbered park land running up the narrow glen of the Cothi, indicate some old abiding place of note, and one catches sight, too, for the first time, of mountain shoulders looming in the rear. This is Dolau Cothy, a seat of the old and well-known race of Johnes, and a

place celebrated not only for the secluded charm of its situation, but for some quite wonderful remains of British and Roman mining work.

For, on the face of a wooded hill, but a few hundred yards from the house, may be seen the very caves which the ancient Britons roughly hewed out in their search for the gold that lurks below in moderate but appreciable quantity.[1] A stone's throw away from these more primitive traces are the smoothly-hewn, square tunnels of the Romans, to all appearance the work of yesterday, driven with the same intent, and amid whose damp darkness you may still penetrate quite a distance into the bowels of the earth. And as if to round the ages, though at the expense, beyond a doubt, of the picturesque, a small company are still, or, to be literal, were till quite lately, following in far different fashion the track of Briton and Roman. The late Judge Johnes, of Dolau Cothy, brought together many and curious things which have been unearthed upon the spot and in the neighbourhood, the most interesting, perhaps, being a solid gold chain of admirable workmanship and Roman make, and, no doubt, of local gold, and a Roman milestone.

A disciple of the Borrovian cult will have some additional interest in the road we are now following, for the author of *Wild Wales* tramped it himself in late autumn, losing much, no doubt, of its charms by such belated wandering. But even thus he was fascinated by Dolau Cothy, dull as were the skies and bare the boughs. He pictured himself, in his quaint way, leading a life of vast contentment within its walls, seated by a cheerful fire signing warrants, and translating Lewis Glyn Cothi's odes, and quaffing rich ale out of a generous tankard. If Borrow had known how many treasures after his own heart the house contained, his enthusiasm would have mounted higher still, and, doubtless, prompted him to venture an interview,

[1] The Pumpsaint Stone is at Dolau Cothy—in which the Romans ground the gold-bearing quartz—and the result still forms part of the gravel for the drives and walks near the house.

which could hardly have been otherwise than mutually agreeable. He tells us, too, how he lay in the "Pumpsaint Inn," at the lodge gates, for the night, spent the evening in the kitchen with the landlord's family, and, after a refreshing slumber, woke to hear the murmur of a brook in his ears: and

The Lampeter Road.

the thought then flashed across him that this must be the classic Cothi, and this the country which produced the "Immortal Lewis, the greatest poet, after ap Gwilym, in all Welsh literature."

Lewis Glyn Cothi certainly stands high enough among Welsh

poets. His period of vigour and song seems to have been from about 1460 to 1490. He was both poet and soldier, for he fought much in the Wars of the Roses, was an enthusiastic Lancastrian, a follower of Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, and a sufferer in his cause. When Jasper had to fly the country, Lewis remained and was hard put to it in avoiding capture. He hid in Chester in disguise, but was eventually found and deprived of everything he possessed, a proceeding which accounts for his loathing of the men of Chester, and his complimentary poems to any leader who made havoc among them. Then or at another time he got into trouble in the same city for marrying a widow without the leave of the magistrates—a serious offence for a Welshman in the century following Glyndwr's war. One of his best known poems in fact is a most virulent satire on an English wedding in Flint, to which he had been invited. He would doubtless have abstained from criticising the meat and drink as he did, but for the dire offence of slighting his performances in favour of a piper, the player too of an instrument despised by the Welsh. The brutal Saxons apparently would have none of Lewis, but "bawled for Will the piper, lowborn wretch," and this is the poet's picture of poor Will, or rather a sample from it—

> "The churl did blow a grating shriek,
> The bag did swell and harshly squeak,
> As does a goose from nightmare crying,
> Or dog, crushed by a chest, when dying
> This whistling box's changless note
> Is forced from turgid veins and throat.
> The sound is like a crane's harsh moan,
> Or like a gosling's latest groan,
> Just such a noise a wounded goat
> Sends from her hoarse and gurgling throat."

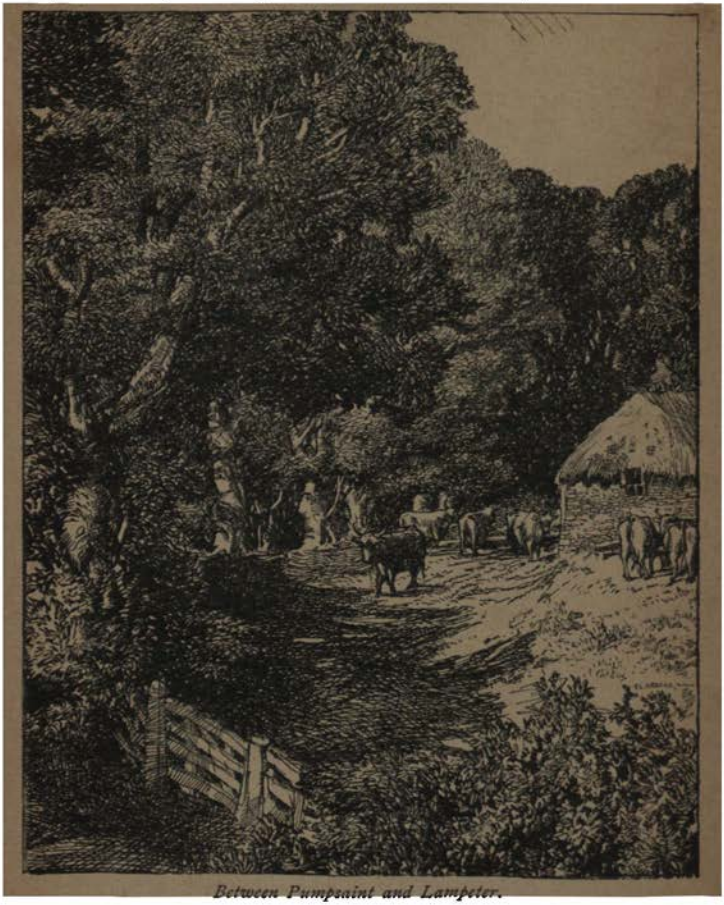
Whether on account of his sufferings or his talents as a poet, he had most certainly a rooted notion that his friends and patrons ought to be generous to him, and the number of poems he addressed to donors, or potential donors, on this

supposition is quite remarkable. One would gather from these metrical petitions that the writer was being continually unhorsed. To John Phillip of St. Clears he prays for a horse, because the other bards get to musical and literary competitions ahead of him, and so gain undue advantage. To Howel ab Evan of Radnor he writes for a saddle, the Earl of Pembroke having promised him a horse. Of the men of Elvael in Radnor he not only begs a horse, but describes the points he would like it to possess. In a poem to a Rhayader friend, again, he condoles with him on a bad sabre cut on the face, but thinks that the crucifix shape he hears it has assumed should be accounted a vast consolation. Of one David Lloyd he begs a bow and arrows since those already given him were stolen. To Gutyn of Oswestry he writes for a new rapier to teach the accursed men of Chester better manners. In poems to other people who have befriended him, he writes in lavish praise of their horses and hospitalities. To "Gwenllian of the golden locks and the skin like drifted snow," Glyndwr's illegitimate daughter, who married Rhys of Cenarth in Cardiganshire, he indites a well known ode. He was naturally enthusiastic on the accession of Henry VII., for every reason, and spent his last years, let us hope, in comfort on the banks of the Cothi with a good horse to ride and no lack of hospitable friends.

It is nine miles from here to Lampeter, through a semi-wild, and for the most part not very long enclosed, country of high smooth hills, where black cattle and sheep are pasturing amid a liberal sprinkling of gorse and fern, while occasional peeps of far away blue hills or mountains relieve a not particularly inspiring outlook. Interest quickens however, as with the long descent into the Teify Valley, the billowy lowlands of Cardiganshire, spreading away seaward beyond the glistening trail of its famous stream, fill the view.

Lampeter, which lies right in front of us, across the river, as we touch level ground, one need hardly remark, is a place of

note far beyond its size, which is quite trifling. It is delightfully situated, on a gentle eminence at a point where two



Between Pumpsaint and Lampeter.

smaller valleys, though each important highways, join that of the Teify, which is here a short mile in width. Low hills, for the most part richly wooded and effectively grouped, look

down from three sides on this little stronghold of Welsh clericalism. The fourth looks out over many miles of fat and timbered pasture land, through which the best trouting river in Wales tumbles its amber, bog-fed streams. Llanbedr pont Stephen is the ancient and correct name of Lampeter. It was so-called, at any rate in the 12th century, for Giraldus tells us how the archbishop preached there and induced many persons to take the cross. It has been vaguely identified with Stephen, King of England. As a matter of fact, destructive busybodies have long since ascertained that this Stephen was a local person of remote date who gave his name to the bridge for the very prosaic reason that he built it. Lampeter is a diminutive market town of the typical South Welsh pattern, slightly inflated under the influence of the College, which has existed there for eighty years, and been the main feeder of the Welsh Church for much of that time. A more out-of-the-way spot for a railroad town it would be hard to find in all Wales. In the founding of Welsh institutions, however, there is always strenuous rivalry between north and south, and Lampeter had the mollifying advantage of being equally inconvenient for both. But then it is in Cardiganshire, and whether that induced the county's phenomenal fecundity in parsons, or merely stimulated an old tradition, I do not know, but from this point of view at any rate it is admirably situated.

The College, beyond any doubt, is a most delectable spot. The older buildings are for every practical purpose a reproduction of an Oxford College, with quad and gate towers, chapel, dining-hall, buttery, library, and undergraduates' rooms all in much the same situations you would look for them in a college on the Cam or Isis. The fabric is of a simpler and less costly order, but that is a detail; the plan is the same, and eighty years have done a great deal to mellow the walls, and hide them in places with vines and creepers. The grounds, too, are charming with generous stretches of lawn shaded by well-grown

trees. There is a fine fragrance of academic repose about the place that the quiet little town at its gates certainly does nothing to disturb, while its secluded situation in a delightful district give a charm to Lampeter that should surely help to make their College days a pleasant and inspiring memory to the hundreds of Welsh vicars and curates who are educated there.

Many famous men too have in their earlier days held office at St. David's College, and paced these pleasant walks. Bishop Thirlwall, Rowland Williams, of *Essays and Reviews* note, and Bishop Ollivant, all in their day vice-principals, is but to mention some of them. The College has the full power of granting degrees, and though we are not concerned here with such matters, the pass degree, as an intellectual achievement, is, I believe, about on a par with that of Oxford and Cambridge. Residence is necessary, as in the old universities, the division of terms practically the same, and three years is the full course. There are now about one hundred and twenty undergraduates, the highest figure, I think, yet reached, or nearly so. At any rate Lampeter has never exercised a greater influence on the Welsh Church than she now does. Omitting the fringes of English-speaking Wales towards the border, St. David's College graduates greatly preponderate among the rural clergy, though there is of course a sprinkling of Jesus' men as well as those of other colleges in the old universities. The lingual question makes it natural and inevitable that the bulk of the Welsh clergy should not only be Welshmen, but generally Welshmen sprung from the ranks of the people. The higher classes, even if they habitually spoke Welsh or found sufficient attraction in their own branch of the Church, which is not the case, and for perhaps obvious reasons would only supply a small fraction of the demand.

Lampeter then has an unusually important function to fulfil, and she has to do it cheaply. From fifty to sixty-five pounds a year will cover a student's entire expenses while in residence, and nowadays practically all are poor men and all go there to

work. There was a period, some time ago, when a liberal sprinkling of another sort came here; Englishmen of lively habits, who, for various reasons unconnected with economy, did not see their way to reaching a white tie through the older Universities. There are yet veterans employed about the place who can tell strange stories of the pranks that were played by these exotic worldlings in the middle of the century. And the town of Lampeter, which now contains only about two thousand people, and in those days had many less and those of a more primitive type, must have winced considerably under the nocturnal raids of the Saxon Mohawks.

But Lampeter, small though it is, had its place in the story of Wales long before it became a centre of theology and a fortress of Welsh Anglicanism. A very little town went a very long way in Cardiganshire in those days as in these, and not the least memorable of its experiences must have been the occasion when the very considerable forces of the county were paraded, disbanded and paid off at the close of the civil war in the market place.

Aberystwith sprang into prominence in the last century, but it dominates and wholly belongs to that northern corner of the county which is so close to North Wales that by associations and interests, and even in speech, it is accounted almost North Welsh. The notable scenery which surrounds it is most certainly credited to North Wales by nine people out of ten. It is a cosmopolitan spot, the haunt of thousands of tourists, who rarely penetrate to the southward, and it forms a district in itself, with which the bulk of the large county of Cardigan has little concern. For this reason I shall not touch the northern extremity of the ancient Edwardian shire, once the sub-kingdom of Ceredigion, and all allusions to the county here must be understood as excluding the upper fragment, or the Aberystwith district.

Lampeter then, insignificant as it may appear, apart from its College, is the half-way town between Aberystwith in the far north

and poor isolated, melancholy Cardigan down on the extreme south-west, and is the most central place in the county, and nearly the most important.

Now Cardigan is a country to itself, and in some ways the most characteristic shire in Wales. Possibly, dear reader, its shape was imprinted on your infantile mind when you closed your geography book for good on going to a public school. If not, note the crescent it forms, its inner arc represented by a long sea-coast, unrelieved by any harbour or port of familiar name; its outer one an almost continuous barrier of mountains, shutting it off completely from the rest of the world. The whole way indeed from Aberystwith and Plinlimmon to the road by which we have just entered Lampeter, the mountain wilderness of Ellineth is to Cardiganshire a veritable Chinese wall, over which no traffic can pass. Round the lower bend of the semi-circle below Lampeter an extremely steep country on the Carmarthen side of the Teify takes the place of the mountains. Tolerable roads clamber out through this, so does the railroad. But one can well understand why the Cardiganshire man of former days was inclined to think there was no place like home, and thus unconsciously develop an individuality that is thoroughly recognised in Wales. "The Cardy" is the most outstanding type, perhaps the only familiarly alluded to type of Welshmen in everyday life. Possibly the isolation of Cardiganshire and its intensely agricultural life is not the only factor in the production of this excellent and shrewd specimen of rural humanity. Without boggling over primitive races of Wales, the round-heads and the long-heads, Goidels and Brythons, Picts and Celts, it is quite certain that the position of Cardigan made it the last refuge of the beaten and the first landing-place of returning exiles. Primitive man is no doubt more stoutly represented in this west coast country than inland. Black hair and eyes, swarthy complexion, a round rather bullet head, thick neck and sturdy frame roughly represents the popular notion of a "Cardy," which in truth would have to

be filled in by further and subtler touches. Other Welshmen look on him as a somewhat distinct specimen of their family, and with a mixture of respect and the other thing, that I cannot quite define and do not wish to. In some ways he is the Paddy of Wales, in others quite the opposite, being noted for industry, independence, and a genius for the main chance. I have heard Welshmen speak of the Cardy as thicker skinned, less imaginative and of coarser fibre than his neighbours, having somewhat of the clod about him, in short, and yet the county produces more parsons, preachers and schoolmasters than any in Wales.

A leading feature of Cardiganshire is the tradition among Nonconformist farmers, who are far in the majority, to put one son into the Church. In spite of recent bitterness, this curious paradox is as rife as ever, and one result of it is that the feeling towards the Church among Nonconformists is generally more friendly than elsewhere. The poor Cardigan farmer, who works and saves that his son may cut the faith of his fathers and become a gentleman in this fashion, bares his breast, it is true, to the shafts of the cynic. But let us look at it from another point of view, and credit him with liberal views on these matters, and a covert regard for the old Mother Church that his immediate forbears were in a sense driven out of by contemptuous neglect. It is no uncommon thing to find two brothers in Cardiganshire, one a parson and the other a preacher. For one Lampeter is handy, for the other the University of Wales at Aberystwith or Bala College. The county is famous too for the number of its freeholders, but some of these matters are sure to crop up as we traverse its hilly roads, for in the whole shire there is scarcely a patch of level ground but the bog of Tregaron.

Now, for the tourist whose time is limited, and who cannot wander about Cardiganshire for weeks as it has been my pleasure to do of late, there are three distinct excursions from Lampeter that are well within the capacity of a moderately robust cyclist,

and can be achieved by those dependent on other means of locomotion, though less satisfactorily, by rail or trap. I will say nothing about the hardy pedestrian, as he has disappeared from the road, and no wonder. He merely carried a knapsack for twenty miles through the dust in former days, because the hiring of hackney carriages was not only exceedingly expensive, but sitting still in them a trial to the healthy and vigorous, and, moreover, of small sanitary profit. The people who went heel and toe over the Macadam in old days are precisely the ones who now on a cycle get quite reasonable exercise and enjoy the scenery and see three times as much of it in the day with a cool head and a fresher and more receptive brain. It is hurled at the bicycle by some critics, who have never ridden one, and themselves, perhaps, rarely accomplish a greater pedestrian feat than the width of Hyde Park, that the machine is unsuited for cross-country work. But if you wish to reach a point ten miles away, whither a good road leads through a pretty country, it is nearly sure to be as short as any route. The glorified pedestrian would certainly have taken the road. If he had not done so, it would have been only to save his feet or perhaps a mile or two. The question of hill walking is utterly irrelevant to that of cycling. There are still belated beings who seem to think it has exerted some malign influence on those who enjoy the hills. Speaking as a good walker I can truly say that the cycle has given me many a pleasant hour on moors and mountains that would have been hopelessly out of reach under conditions over which some foolish folk grow maudlin.

But, as I was saying, there are three distinct excursions from Lampeter in different directions which, for those who can do no more, will give a fairly complete survey of the Cardiganshire we are concerned with. The first is up the Teify, and along the skirts of the mountains to Strata Florida Abbey sixteen miles: the second due west to Aberayron on the sea-coast fourteen miles; the third down the Teify to Cardigan, near its mouth about twice the distance of the others.

For ourselves, let us be off, without more delay, for Strata Florida, pass through the little market-place where the three brief and homely streets of Lampeter meet, and the pulse of the city beats on busy days, and the loafers loaf on off-days. We run down past a few shops and a row of villas towards the river, turn sharp to the left under the railway, and in a very few minutes are buried in the leafy lanes that lead to Llanfair-Clydogau and Tregaron. August has stolen upon us whilst we have been loitering about in Carmarthenshire; but August, month of dreadful omen to the Solitary, need have no terrors for him in South Cardiganshire. The sombre inn at Lampeter will not oppress him with season prices, but, in the *ennui* of the Long Vacation, look on him rather as a welcome guest at normal rates. Here, in the middle and best of three alternative roads to Tregaron, no alien holiday makers will disturb the leafy calm. On the tangled hedgerows, where the brier roses riot and the foxgloves rear their thick clusters of purple spears, and on the pendant boughs of ash and oak, the abundant traces of last month's hay carts still flicker in the summer breeze. But now harvest is descending on this warm corner of the Vale of Teify. The grain is ripe or fast ripening, and making golden patches amid the more abundant pastures on the sunny slopes above the river banks. The first click of the reaping machine comes down from somewhere above the road, and, over the top of a sheeny wall of bracken, a strip of gold suggests the lower headland of a fully-ripened wheatfield. Here and there, on the brink of the valley, and with low whitewashed walls of byre or barn thrust on to the road, the modest homestead of the Cardiganshire farmer awaits the gathering of the year's toil. Here are the old grey slate-stone roofs, and on the dwelling, perhaps, the great hood of thatch that belongs as much to this county as to its neighbour; and a front wall quite likely of saffron colour with window borders picked out in black or blue. There are no children now as of yore hanging about the yards or doing odd jobs in the fields. They have all toddled into

school at Lampeter to learn, among other things, the language of which their fathers and mothers are here almost or wholly ignorant. Of labourers, there are practically none, and one may feel almost certain that the good man, as he sits upon the "reaper" himself and sees the ripe grain falling in swathes beside him, is revolving in his mind the ways and means of gathering it should the elements prove unkind, and the coming holiday not produce some of that amateur assistance which is of such mutual benefit to both town and country mouse.

Through the meadows on our right, where black cattle are pasturing and big flocks of rooks and starlings are in constant motion, and the ubiquitous peewits sweeping and calling, the Teify winds with much composure for a mountain stream. Betimes, however, it makes a rush across the flats for our bank, and in broad shimmering shallows dashes against the woody foot of the slope only to turn back, baffled and fretting, into some big black salmon pool, and to slip off again into the meadows below, with "gentle rore," as the old poets not inaptly have it.

Now there may be stretches of other rivers as good, but I think there can be no doubt that the Teify is, on the whole, the most naturally prolific and the best trout river to-day in Wales. Large portions of it are well preserved and equally lengthy ones very heavily fished, with proportionate results. As elsewhere, the local experts complain of decreased stock, though there are neither pike nor coarse fish in the Teify. For myself, unhappily, I have only fished it at the tail end of a dry season, when every trout had to be coaxed and the contents of a basket, if divided by the hours occupied in achieving it, would make angling to the uninitiated seem an unprofitable occupation. Still I may recall many pleasant mornings even at the end of the season spent in the streams of the Teify, and by no means blank ones, and a more delightful river I never threw a fly on. What is more to the point, however, I know what local friends do in the spring season even yet, and I

greatly doubt whether any river in Wales will average as well. But there is perhaps some good reason for this. The Teify does not run down so low as the Usk or the Towy, for it is fed by the great bog of Tregaron, through which it flows for several miles. Furthermore, owing to this great spongy morass draining slowly into it, a flood does not run off in twenty-four hours as in most other rivers in these degenerate days. It is generally conceded that this rapid emptying of flood water with its fresh food supplies is a potent factor in the decrease of fish so marked in recent years. The Teify, which from a unique circumstance does not suffer to the same extent, seems to offer an excellent illustration of what is more than theory. The deplorable season of 1901, however, when few salmon could get up, has almost caused me to forget that the Teify is an excellent salmon river. Hear, indeed, what Giraldus says of it: "That noble river Teify abounds with the finest salmon of any river in Wales. It has another peculiarity, being the only river in Wales or England that has beavers." And he gives us a long description of the habits of these animals as he saw them in 1188. But the general reader will not thank me for this page of fishing shop, while the angler, who might feel tempted to the Teify in spring, should take note that native sportsmen turn out then in such abundance as to greatly neutralise the excellence of the fishing.

Across the Teify we can see from here the hamlet of Cellan, with its diminutive and ancient church and its wild back-lying hill-parish, rich in camps and strange sepulchral stones. A little below, a bit of the important Roman road, Sarn Helen, connecting the Towy valley and the old Roman town of Loventium, now Pont-Llanio, and places far more remote and more important, crosses our path, while further on, near Llanfair bridge, you may see it breasting the opposite hill between two stone banks and still used as a lane. Crossing the river to the eastern bank, the mountains begin to break out above the foothills that have hitherto obscured them, and we

Llan-Dewi-brefi.

are soon treading on their skirts. A new church at Llanfair-Clydogau stands upon an ancient site. Beneath it are vaults in which the Johnes family are buried to this day. Just across the lane is a quiet unnoticeable farmhouse, and near it the workings of a deserted lead mine. The latter for years employed much labour, the former contains the scant remains of a country seat of famous stocks. It has all vanished now save an outhouse, but it is said the walls were fifteen feet thick and carried the date of 1080 upon them! Be that as it may, a particular favourite of Charles I., a Lloyd, once lived here, who was member for the county and resigned his seat when Strafford fell, "a gentleman and a scholar nobly just in his deportment, eloquent in tongue and pen, and naturally fit to manage the affairs of his country." The Johnes of Havod succeeded to it later, and altogether it was a notable mansion, and once surrounded by a deer park of several hundred acres. Not a trace of its former glories now survives. The Sarn Helen alone, as if to mock the fleeting efforts of after builders, shoots its hard narrow walled-in causeway up the hillside in such fashion that every ploughman within sight can point it out, and take his hat off to it as "an anshant thing."

Four miles of lane-like road twisting along the foot of the green slopes of those mountains, whose further edges we saw so much of in Brecon and Radnor, brings us to a deep rift in their sides. Right at the mouth of it stands an ancient grey and white village. Perched high in the centre of the village is a still more ancient and withal a distinguished-looking church. This is Llan-Dewi-brefi, a famous landmark in the early history of Welsh Christianity. The church, as its name implies (the church of St. David on the Brefi), is a dedication to that Saint whose name has been closely associated with the spot through all ages. For here, in the year 519, a great convocation of the Fathers of the Christian Church was held for the combating of the Pelagian heresy, which was sapping Welsh orthodoxy. "The Saints of Anjou and Armorica, the Saints of England,

Ewias and of the North, of Man and Powys, and Anglesea, of Ireland and Gwynedd, Devonshire and Kent, of Brecheiniog, country of Heroism, and of Maelienydd, desert region"; were all here, and Saint David who on this occasion addressed the multitude in powerful language, was visited early in his discourse by a white dove that, descending from heaven, alighted on his shoulder. Then the ground on which he was standing "gradually rose under under him till it became a hill, from whence his voice like a loud-sounding trumpet was clearly heard and understood by all, both near and far off, seven thousand persons, on the top of which hill a church was afterwards built, and stands till this day."

The present building was erected by that indefatigable architect, Bishop Beck, of St. David's, together with a college at the end of the 12th century. It was once cruciform and much larger than now, the transepts having fallen. It boasts a fine embattled tower, surmounted by a short spire, and on the elevation so miraculously raised by the tread of the Saint's holy feet, with the solemn hills rising high behind it, and the wild gorge whence the Brefi issues, penetrating their heart, makes an impressive spectacle. What the earlier church was like, we may not know, but the strange things that happened at its erection are one of the most cherished legends in Wales. For as the oxen were dragging the stone for the building, mighty beasts both of them, they encountered a hill, and in their efforts one of them dropped dead. Whereupon its mate bellowed nine times with such tremendous force that the whole valley shook and the troublesome hill straightened itself out, so that the survivor could draw the load easily to its destination. A huge petrified horn, a relic of course of one of these magic beasts, who were no doubt the same team with which Huw Gadarn hauled the afranc from the lake, was preserved till recent times. "Brefi," I might add, signifies a bellowing, and so the stream and village combine in their names to preserve all these weird traditions. There was another too in ancient days which ran: "Whoever is buried in

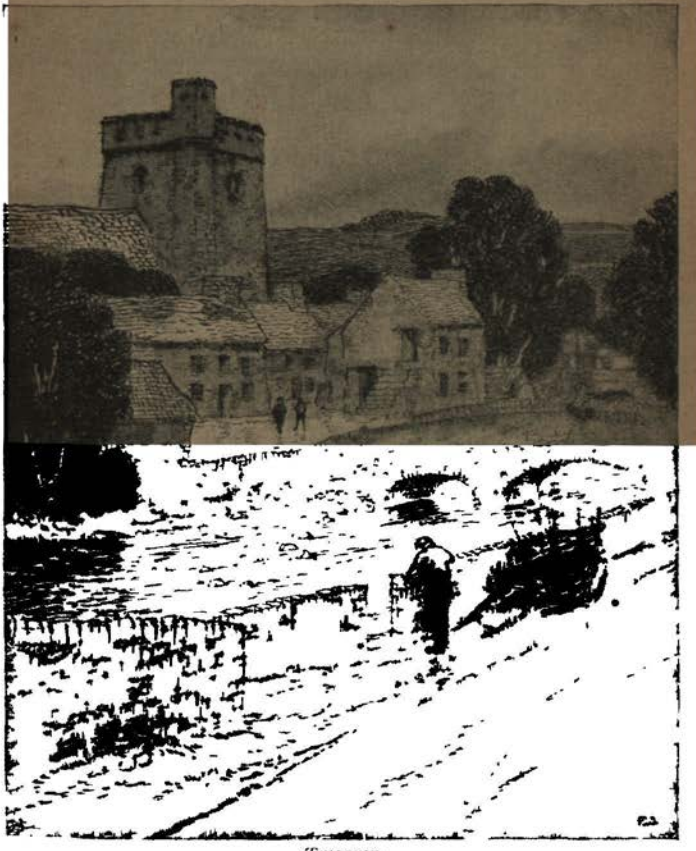
the church of Dewi goes to heaven." There are, moreover, three very remarkable upright inscribed stones standing in different parts of the churchyard, calculated to still further enhance the mystic influences of the spot. Nor should it be forgotten that it was on the occasion of this historic gathering when St. David preached his great sermon and worked his great miracle that he was promoted with "loud acclamations" to the Archbishopric, which shifted with his elevation from Caerleon to the coast of Pembroke, where the See has remained ever since.

A Brecon poet of the twelfth century has left a sketch of what he saw at Llandewi Brefi, which might interest a traveller of the twentieth. He found himself among "blessed wise ones and purified priests; truth as a veil hanging over the altar; noble matrons and a chorus, raised high to keep off the crowd, and most musical withal; around the place are generous cliffs, fair and gentle dwellings, much company, wines, spiced ale, and orderly people." One must draw the conclusion that this corner of Cardiganshire is not so much in the world as it was either in the twelfth or sixth centuries.

There was a great battle, too, if the reader is not tired of battles, fought here, just at a time when the Welsh ought to have been watching the Normans with all their eyes, to wit, in 1073, between the princes of South Wales and the men of Powys and the north, under the sons of Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, of famous name. The southerners were defeated, and the spot, Rhyd-y-meirch, on the Camddwr, to the northward, still preserves the memory of the battle, in its meaning "the ford of the horsemen."

A three mile ride, with the lower slope of the mountains on our right, and the Teify, narrower and noisier than below, sparkling amid open pastures on our left, brings us to Tregaron. This little town lies near the entrance of the next gorge in the mountains, and is a very much more important place than Llandewi Brefi, judged from a modern standpoint. Not that

there is the faintest touch of modernity about Tregaron (Trev-Caron), but it is quite by way of being a town, and derives its name from the far-away-days of Welsh mythology, and from a



Tregaron.

king (presumably of Ceredigion), named Caron. This monarch, so runs the tale, rose from the ranks, a rare feat in old Wales, and by valour and industry ran a career of the *Log Cabin to*

White House description, dying at the nebulous date of 219, and receiving canonisation on his merits. Tregaron is also celebrated, it may be remembered, as the birthplace and early home of our old friend, Twm Sion Catti, of whom enough has been said. The only artery of any kind through the Ellenith mountains, starts too from here. It is passable for rough, two-wheeled traps, and, after struggling painfully heavenwards, through enclosed lands to the mouth of the gorge, follows it up in stony and tortuous ascent through a wild valley overhung by rocky crags. After some five or six miles of this, it surmounts the Towy watershed, crosses the wild, tempestuous head-waters of that romantic stream, and still continuing for some miles through mountain solitudes, drops down the sources of the Irfon to Abergwessin in Breconshire, where we made its acquaintance in a former chapter. This rough track is the only way out of Cardiganshire, south of the Aberystwith and Rhayader coach road in the north, and the Lampeter and Llandovery road in the south. But I would strongly counsel all who can, to face it on foot or ponyback, though, indeed, I have known worse routes negotiated on a cycle, but it depends, of course, on what one means by cycling, or what regard one has for tyres. Llyn Berwyn, already noticed as the scene of our dog-cart adventure in the bog, lies high up in the solitudes behind Tregaron, a lake of peat-coloured water, about a mile and a half in circumference, on whose lonely shores you might spend many days, probably weeks, without seeing a human being but an occasional shepherd. It is full of fine but capricious trout, and the wading is particularly good.

I have never seen, anywhere, a place whose atmosphere suggests Ireland quite so strongly as that of Tregaron. The little townlet is not unpicturesque. A tributary of the Teify prattles through its midst beneath a stone bridge. The church, commemorating the saintship of King Caron, stands upon a rocky knoll in its centre, and lifts a stern, embattled tower with some distinction above the clustering slate roofs and winding lanes

and whitewashed walls below. It is in the market-square, perhaps, surrounded by low-pitched buildings, that memories of the Sister Isle are chiefly wafted to the mind, much strengthened by the scent of the peat-smoke that so pleasantly permeates the atmosphere. The dilapidation and dirt of an Irish town has, of course, here no equivalent, but there is the same indifference to the graces and superfluities of urban life that distinguish a southern Irish market town. Like these latter, Tregaron and its counterparts in South Wales remind one of plain but well-to-do people, who, from motives of thrift or indifference, habitually wear old clothes and like it. They seem to say: "We are up to our neck in cattle and sheep, ponies or pigs, mud and dust, once or twice a week. That is our business, and there is no occasion for outward elegances. We aren't dressy, but you needn't think we are poverty-stricken, or left out in the cold, or discontented, if you come along on an off-day, a Friday or a Monday, for instance, and see no one in the street." Indeed, I have been through Tregaron, on a busy day, and had to get off and push my cycle, through the crowd of farmers, from one end of the little town to the other. When the cursory traveller calls these rustic centres opprobrious names, as he has done for a hundred years, he forgets they only exist for the convenience of the country round, and are mere centres of sale or exchange. Why should there be any pride of civic life or of urban decorations? What are increase of population, extension of streets, electric lights, to a big village that must inevitably be the rendezvous, whether they like it or not, of a few hundred farmers, and can never be anything more, and has no earthly reason for wishing to be. This is not a country of towns, but of fair pastures and purling streams, of sheep and cattle and snug homesteads, of lonely mountains and sea-washed cliffs. In the market-place of Tregaron, however, a grateful neighbourhood has executed a statue to Mr. Richards, a well-known Welsh member of Parliament for many years. And speaking of that august assembly, reminds me that Tregaron, which once shared with Lampeter and

some other small towns the privilege of sending a member to it, proved itself such a hot-bed of corruption that even in that hardened period, when Walpole was in power, its misdeeds could not be blinked, and it was disfranchised. This subject again suggests public-houses, and seeing how scarce accommodation is in Cardiganshire we must not forget the "Talbot Arms," at Tregaron, where, to judge from a passing acquaintance, I should say the explorer of this district, or the fisherman, could make himself happy, in a moderate way, for as long as need be.

I have spoken more than once of the bog of Tregaron, and indeed I know nothing like it in England or Wales. It virtually begins close to the town, and both railway and road skirt it or run through it for many miles to the northward. What is left of it is perhaps six miles long and one broad, a genuine, flat, sad, sombre, Irish bog, where the turf-cutters have been at work for ages and haunted by grouse and snipe, ducks and teal. There are plenty of bogs in Wales and northern England, but they are on the tops or slopes of hills or cups in the valleys. But here is the genuine thing, level as a lake. It might be a bit of the bog of Allan imported direct from the King's County. The undulating farming land sprinkled with whitewashed homesteads, as in mid-Ireland, dip down to it like green shores to a russet sea. The grouse, too, that are shot here every August will, I imagine, be the only genuine "bog-grouse," and an Irishman will recognise the distinction, in Wales or England.

Still travelling northward, skirting or traversing the level country reclaimed in past ages from the bog of Tregaron, half-a-dozen miles of uneventful progress bring us to the flourishing village with a name that must quite paralyse the tongue of the English tourists who do find their way south thus far from Aberystwith, and if travelling by rail, must, I presume, struggle with it at the ticket office. Pontrhydfendigaiad is, in fact, the starting point for Strata Florida, or more properly Ystradfflur,

which historic spot is only two miles distant along a level and admirable road.

It is in truth a most romantic nook where these scant remains of the Cistercian Abbey of the South Welsh Princes have been gradually crumbling for three centuries, till the friendly hand of the antiquary was stretched out to preserve for us what time and despoilers have spared. The course of the Teify which we are still following has now bent in towards the mountains which here open out a short but level valley, at whose

Pontrhydfendigaiad.

head, in a *cul-de-sac*, so far as travel goes, the famous ruins stand. Wild hills, rock crowned and rock breasted many of them, and looking, which indeed they are, but the outer fringe of greater and far-reaching solitudes, fill in three sides of the narrow, fertile plain, into whose head the Teify comes tumbling fresh from the mountain lakes that give it birth. Near the banks of the river, where a group of big trees shows out well against the mountain background, we shall find the low walls which enclose the foundations and remains of the abbey

together with the west doorway, a beautiful Norman arch with an adjoining window, which is all that is visible from outside. An old grange farmhouse abuts upon the abbey, and stands by the roadside. Here you may alight, pay your trifle, and be admitted into the precincts where marks of the antiquaries' and excavators' hand are everywhere rife. As a mere spectacle there is little to be seen. But with the help of a plan, kept at the farmhouse, you may readily trace out the long nave, choir, and presbytery, both transepts and both aisles, besides the chapter house, library, and other tributary buildings, while the walls in many places are still standing more than head high. Much interesting detail, too, has been recently collected in the shape of tiles, mouldings, stone figures, and so forth. Underneath the eastern wall of the south transept is the monks' cemetery, where are ten or a dozen graves, flat slabs with headstones showing curious interlaced ropework-carving of a Celtic pattern. Most people who visit Strata Florida in any serious mood will give themselves up rather to the spell of its great associations, the charm of its inspiring situation, its infinite and pathetic harmony, than to technical investigations.

Discussion still waxes warm among experts as to the original founder of the Abbey. We must go with the majority, and credit its creation to Rhys ap Griffith in 1164. "The Lord Rhys, the head and shield and strength of the south and all Wales." But there was a much older monastery than this whose fragments may still be traced, some two miles away on the Fflur. The spot is known as Yr Hen Monachlog (the old monastery), founded as is supposed by Rhys ap Tudor, the grandfather of the other Rhys. But this was before Cistercian times, so when the old foundation was moved, name and all, to the present site, it must have started life afresh under new auspices. The monastery was richly endowed by the Welsh Princes, and owned the whole of these mountains as well as a large tract of the admirable valley land we are now standing on, to say nothing of wide domains beyond Llandovery: and

the Cistercians, it will be remembered, were great sheep farmers.

There is one particular spot, however, amid the ruins that must give one pause in wandering through them, though indeed there is nothing there now but four rude walls enclosing a bed of weeds and nettles. This is the chamber where was treasured that still extant chronicle of Wales, which the monks

Ystradfflur.

wrote up day by day for one hundred and thirty years—the most momentous period, in short, of Welsh history—comparing it at frequent intervals with that other one on which contemporaries at Conway were as consistently labouring. The somewhat harrowing tale came abruptly to an end with the death of Llewelyn—without any apparent trace of prior design. Sentiment, and perhaps truly, loves to picture in this the pen

dropping suddenly from the hands of these faithful chroniclers as if black chaos had fallen, and the hearts of the historians had broken with this snapping of the thread of Welsh national life.

So many things have happened at Strata Florida, it is not easy to be concise. We may at any rate picture Llewelyn the Great here in 1238 at a solemn function to which he summoned all the chiefs and lords of Wales, for the not very palatable operation of swearing fealty to his son David, born of an English Princess, and passing over that elder son Griffith, who afterwards broke his neck in the ditch of the Tower of London, trying to escape from Henry III.'s clutches.

The Abbey was burned in 1284 by Edward I. in his anger at the assistance rendered by Cardiganshire to the futile rebellion of Madoc. In the early part of Glyndwr's rising, when Henry IV. marched round Wales in pursuit of him, the King made the Abbey his headquarters while trying to catch the Welsh in the Plinlimmon mountains. He treated the monks roughly for their suspected sympathies with the Welsh chief and stabled his horses at the high altar. It was here that a fine old gentleman, Griffith Vychan of Cayo, which place we passed through in the last chapter was drawn and quartered for openly boasting that his two sons were out with Glyndwr, and purposely misleading the King's troops. He was a man of high position, judged by the amount of wine consumed annually in his establishment. The hospitable traditions of Cayo seem to have been kept up, when, thirty years later, Lewis Glencothi celebrated its convivial character. Lastly, so far at least as we are concerned, Strata Florida was the winter quarters of an army Prince Henry brought down in 1408 to the siege of Aberystwith Castle. It was almost the last important operation of the Glyndwr wars and was a kind of military picnic for the leading chivalry of England and marked by many curious incidents.[1]

Strata Florida was the burial-place of many of the Royal House

[1] See *Life of Owen Glyndwr*.

of South Wales. These distinguished persons, no doubt were laid within the walls, but the spacious old graveyard of the Abbey still stretches down towards the river, walled round and irregularly sprinkled with gravestones old and new, and in its midst the small parish church of insignificant appearance makes but a faint show. Once upon a time, forty yew trees spread their shade above this spacious and historic enclosure. Now but two or three are left, and one only that attracts the eye, a huge, gnarled, and hollow trunk of immense age surmounted by a stubbly brush of green. But one of the glories of Strata Florida is that Dafydd ap Gwilym, the greatest poet in all Welsh literature, is (one must reluctantly admit by tradition only) buried here under a yew tree. May it not be that hoary survivor which practically alone of the forty lifts its distorted and aged form above the heaving turf? Borrow was quite overcome when he came upon the spot where the dust of Dafydd ap Gwilym is said to lie. He took his hat off, and knelt down and kissed the root of the old yew-tree, repeating in English a verse of the contemporary poet Gruffydd Grug's ode to the grave of the Welsh Petrarch.

> "Oh, tree of yew which here I see,
> By Ystrad Flur's blest monastery,
> Beneath thee lies, by cold Death bound,
> The tongue for sweetness once renowned."

Then, under the withered trunk of the same tree, and just four centuries after, comes the tribute of old George Borrow, still on his knees, with bared head and shaking with emotion.

> "Better for thee thy boughs to wave,
> Though scathed, above ap Gwilym's grave,
> Than stand in pristine glory drest
> Where some ignobler bard doth rest."

Dafydd ap Gwilym was born about 1340 at Llanbadarn-fawr, near Aberystwith. His mother was sister to Llewelyn ap Gwilym of Newcastle Emlyn, a personage of such importance as to be called "*The Lord of Cardigan*." His father, Gwilym Gam, was of

good birth, but probably poor, as the marriage was bitterly opposed, and was either contrived in secret or not contrived at all. At any rate, Gwilym "the crooked" had to elope with Ardudval, and as he was taking her through Glamorgan she produced her immortal son, out of doors in a storm, it is said. The mother died next day at Llandaff, married on her death-bed, some affirm, the child being christened on her bier. This it will be conceded is a sufficiently dramatic start in life for any poet. The father married again, but the boy objecting to his choice, went to live with his lordly uncle at Newcastle Emlyn, who brought him up and had him educated. He then tried his stepmother again, with no better results than before, and drifted off to Ivor Hael of Maesaleg in Monmouthshire. Ivor made him his steward, whatever that may have meant, and, with singular lack of discretion, seeing the stripling's fascinations, tutor to his only daughter, Morfydd, who is for ever famous as the object of a number of the poet's best and most impassioned odes. For it is needless to say ap Gwilym made love to her, though more necessary to add that it ripened into a great and enduring passion, which was not returned. The conventional precaution of the times was taken, and Morfydd was sent to a nunnery in Anglesea. The love-sick youth followed her, and in the guise of a lay brother procured work in a neighbouring monastery. This effort, however, was unavailing, but the poet was persistent in his pursuit of this, "Maid of the glowing form, and lily brow beneath a roof of golden tresses."

> "Thou gem of maids, inexorably fair,
> By all the sacred relics I protest,
> That when I die the victim of despair,
> On thee the guilt of poet's death will rest."

It would seem that she partially relented, for ap Gwilym is said — indeed he alludes to it himself — to have married Morfydd in a wood in the Vale of Aeron, the deplorably informal ceremony being performed by a brother bard, Madog

Benfras; but this may only have been a joke, though a grim one enough to the love-sick poet. For Morfydd was certainly married, either willingly or under compulsion, to a middle-aged warrior of the French wars, "Cynfrig Cynin." Ap Gwilym's rage against this man, whom he calls "the hunchback," knew no bounds and he rails against the fickle maid,

> "And the base craft that gave her charms,
> Oh, anguish! to another's arms."

The poet now took extreme measures and carried off Morfydd by stealth or force from her husband's house. He was caught, however, and not being able to pay the fine due for the offence was thrown into prison in Glamorgan. But all this time he had been making fame by his poems, and had been elected "chief bard of Glamorgan," the men of which distinguished county came forward in spirited fashion and paid the fine for his release.

Ap Gwilym sang almost wholly of love and nature. His power of imagery was very great, as can be gathered even in translation. It was when pining in his Glamorgan dungeon, inspired no doubt by the contrast between his own captivity and the freedom of a wild gale he heard blowing around his prison walls, that he wrote one of his finest poems, an Ode to the North Wind, which that well-known scholar, Mr. Johnes, of Havod, nearly a century ago, so admirably translated.

> "Bodiless Glory of the sky
> That, wingless, footless, stern and loud,
> Leap'st on thy starry path on high,
> And chauntest 'mid the mountain cloud:
> Fleet as the wave and fetterless as light,
> Tell to my sinking heart, 'Mine is the dungeon's night.'
>
> "My beauteous native land to me
> Is lost, as to the blinded sight,
> But despot may not grapple thee,
> Thou mock'st the flashing falchion's might;
> And laugh'st amid the citadels of morn,
> The shield of pathless rock and frenzied flood to scorn.

"Wind of the North! no craft may chain,
No brand may scorch, thy goblin wing,
Thou scatterest with thy giant main
The leafy palaces of Spring,
And as the naked woodlands droop or soar,
Liftest thy Anthem where a thousand forests roar.

"Phantom of terror and delight!
Thousands have felt thy airy feet,
When, with wild boyhood's playful sleight,
Thou fling'st the breakers whistling sleet,
Or, o'er the storm, the oaks dismantled height,
Seekest thy couch of waves, unsearchable as night."

All this was in the time of Edward III.! But Dafydd's great passion for Morfydd must not blind us to the fact that, by his own account, his amours were of a most general description. Well-born, popular, and brilliant, and notably handsome, he may well have been a strong favourite with the ladies. A story runs, let us hope a libel, that Dafydd for mere diversion made assignations with twenty-four young women under the same tree and at the same hour, hiding himself in the branches above to watch the sport, which was considerable, when the infuriated maidens, finding no Dafydd to vent their wrath upon, fell to among themselves. The poet had such a profusion of golden hair that the girls in church used to laugh at him, and say it was his sister's. A sort of oral tradition has come down of his appearance as a young man which pictures him as tall and slight, dressed in long trousers with a broad sash round his waist and a sword in it; a loose robe trimmed with fur and a small round cap on his golden hair.

The martial note was dead in Wales, for the time, when ap Gwilym sang. He struck a wholly different key, and though a dandy no doubt, and a ladies' man, he was a true and genuine lover of nature, and sang of the woods and mountains, the streams and birds of his native land with the freshness and accuracy of a man who knew them and loved them, and in the language, it is admitted by all competent critics, of a great poet.

Most of his later years were spent in his native county of Cardigan, or at Talley Abbey, just over the border in Carmarthenshire, whose hoary ruins and twin lakes lie half-way between Lampeter and Llandilo. He died about 1400, the year which saw Wales, after a century of sullen calm, break out once more under Glyndwr into storm and strife. He had outlived all his friends, and at sixty was prematurely old, and longing for death. The pangs of age are upon his brow, and the very memory of his amours is distasteful. The last poem that he wrote is pathetic enough, and it is Morfydd to the end!

"Utterly have passed away,
Youthful prowess, spirit gay,
Wrung for ever from my tongue
Is the glorious power of song.
Ivor, my illustrious guide,
Nest, my patroness, his bride,
Morfydd, idol of my breast,
All are in the dust at rest!
By a life I loathe oppressed,
I am left alone to bear
Time's dread load of grief and care."

The Vale of Ayron.

CHAPTER VIII

" What bard that Ayron sees can fail
To sing the charms of Ayron's vale?
There golden treasures swell the plains,
And herds and flocks are there,
And there the god of plenty reigns
Triumphant all the year;
The nymphs are gay,
The swains are hale,
Such blessings dwell in Ayron's vale.
Were I possessed of regal state,
Presiding o'er a nation,
With crowding senates at my feet
In humble adoration,
I'd envy, if envying might avail,
The happy swains of Ayron's vale."

THE name of the author of these artless and enthusiastic lines has been lost to fame. But it is sufficient to say that they come down to us from the Arcadian age when George III. was King and rural communities were sufficient unto themselves. Not that the Vale of Ayron has altered to the eye one whit since this rural eulogy was penned. Few places in

Great Britain probably have changed much less in that or any other respect. But even the Vale of Ayron cannot nowadays retain its nymphs and swains in that sublime contentment of mind which regarded the surrounding hills as the bounds of their aspirations, and Lampeter as the limit of their giddiest ventures. In these advanced times there may be seen once or twice a day at Lampeter station a weather-beaten, uncanny-looking chariot of a dull reddish hue drawn by two horses. You might fancy for a moment it was a prison van, and that the police had been making a raid on West Cardiganshire. But it is not: it is his Majesty's mail, and travels between Aberayron on the coast and the M. and M. railway along an excellent road of twelve miles through the heart of the country. When the train arrives—at a moment usually beyond the prognostication of the oldest inhabitant—you will see persons eagerly entering the gloomy interior of this picturesque conveyance, or clambering up to precarious situations on its roof. These will be "nymphs and swains of Ayron's Vale" in normal times, or in the holiday seasons perhaps excursionists to the little watering-place at its mouth.

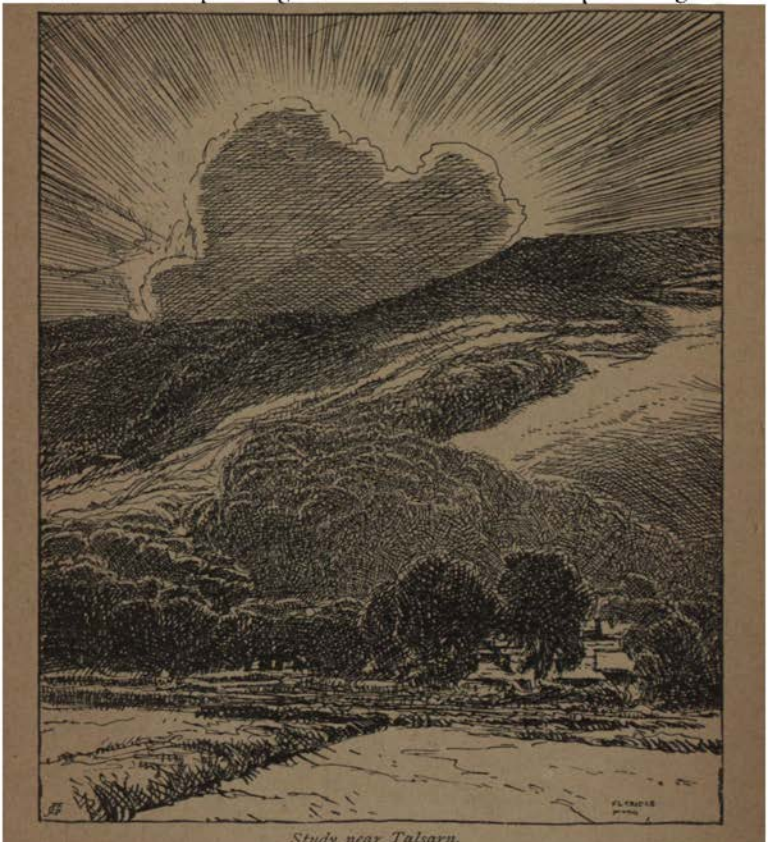
Happily we are dependent neither on time tables nor on shandrydans—and may be off to Ayron's Vale on lighter wings, and with our own company, or that of our own choosing, at what hour we list. Like so many stretches of a dozen or so miles in Wales, the road to Aberayron consists of a long pull up and a long run down. In this case we reach the watershed between Teify and Ayron in four miles, while the drop to the sea-coast is seven or eight. Till we top the watershed there is not a great deal for our pen to do, though plenty for the legs, as it is a steady rise, though mostly rideable, and an admirable road. We pass through the pleasant woods and above the picturesque parklands of Falcondale, where a mountain stream sparkles downwards into limpid trout ponds buried from sight amid a fairyland of varied foliage. Falcondale is, in a sense, the inheritor of the lands and manorial glories of the ancient

house of Peterwell, whose ruins still stand in the meadows outside Lampeter at the end of a once stately but long abandoned avenue, and challenge the curiosity of the most indifferent visitor: that of my reader I will try to satisfy anon.

The last peep of Lampeter, lying snugly in the lap of woods and hills, is entirely pleasing, with the parish church, as is only fitting for so sanctified a spot, standing boldly up on a green ridge, a landmark upon all sides from far and near. Rising above the richer low country, half wild pasture-lands—prolific of bracken, gay with glowing gorse brakes, and purple here and there with patches of heather—mingle in that unconventional fashion which is the charm of South Wales, with the tilled enclosures now so bright in their promise of the coming harvest. A small homestead or two lying away from the road, a quaint cottage of the prevailing type, abutting upon it here and there, seem all-sufficient for the demands of these higher altitudes. The summit gained, a rich prospect of hill, wood, and valley opens to the westward and the sea, though the latter lies hidden for a long time yet by the broken nature into which the whole surface of the "sweet shire of Cardigan" convulses itself. The Vale of Ayron, burrowing and fighting its way seaward through a maze of hills, now lies beneath us. It has come from the north, and Llyn Edwal, a lake lying in one of those isolated bits of mountain wilderness that shoot up here and there in South Wales in such unexpected fashion, gives the river birth. At Talsarn, a mile off our road, whose quaint cottage architecture will repay the detour, it bends to the west, and in the grounds of Llanllear, too, near Talsarn once stood a Cistercian house of white nuns—the traces of which are still plain enough.

As we run down the long descent towards the village of Llanfihangel Ystrad, it will be well to check that natural desire to taste the joys of coasting. I plead guilty myself to a partiality for this form of entertainment on suitable occasions, but I would not cater for the man or woman who would enter the

Vale of Ayron for the first time in that callous fashion. It would be well indeed before the descent has gone too far to halt and sit upon a gate and look northward up this higher



Study near Talsarn.

stretch of the Vale. It is not a scene of great distinction, but merely that of a gentle fall, one behind the other, of hills that reach a thousand feet, perhaps, about their bleaker summits and dip to the narrow floor of the valley, with the infinite

richness of colouring that fields and forests show at this season of Nature's fruition,

> "When mountain, meadow, wood, and stream,
> With unalloying glory gleam."

But Shelley sang of these fair scenes under August skies. Dafydd ap Gwilym was here much longer and much oftener. The very skylarks, now mounting from yonder shaven clover field, may seem more fitly to recall the English poet, but they may be the actual descendants of that other skylark, who, curiously enough, inspired the great Welsh poet also to one of his most memorable efforts.

> "Sentinel of the dawning day
> Reveller of the spring,
> How sweetly, nobly, wild thy flight,
> Thy boundless journeying.
> Far from thy brethren of the woods alone,
> A hermit chorister before God's throne."

But ap Gwilym's invocation of the Ayron skylark was not wholly a burst of abstract rhapsody. He had a favour to ask of the bird, namely, that it would carry a message for him, and, of course, the message was for Morfydd, in far Glamorgan, or, possibly, in Mona's still remoter isle.

> "Ah! wilt thou climb yon heavens for me,
> Yon starry turrets height,
> Thou interlude of melody
> 'Twixt darkness and the light?
> And find, heaven's blessings on thy pinions rest,
> My ladylove, the moonlight of the West!
> No woodland caroller art thou!
> Far from the archer's eye,
> Thy course is o'er the mountain's brow,
> Thy music in the sky!
> Then fearless be thy flight and strong,
> Thou earthly denizen of angel song!"

Yonder, some half dozen miles up that secluded stretch of the Vale of Ayron, you will find the village of Llangeitho,

famous as the headquarters of one of the best known leaders of the religious revival in Wales. The county historian, Sir J. Meyrick, describes it as "the headquarters of those religious fanatics commonly called Methodists!" Daniel Rowlands, like most of them, was a churchman to begin with, and, indeed, was Vicar of Llangeitho itself. He was the best preacher of his day, perhaps of any day, in Wales. Immense crowds gathered to the monthly communions at the secluded Cardiganshire village, from twelve to fifteen hundred people sometimes actually partaking. Like Charles of Bala, Howell Harris, Williams of Pantycelin, and others with whom he was on more or less intimate terms, he inveighed against the laxness of the times, and, as with these others, Sunday observance, or the lack of it, rather, was a favourite object of attack. Sunday evenings, he declared, were spent in idle amusements. "Y chwaren gamp," or the trials of strength between young men in the presence of their elders, was part of the old Sunday programme, also dancing and singing to the harp, and playing tennis against the church wall. In every corner, some sport went on, and, in the summer, *Interludes* were performed, gentlemen and peasants each taking their share in them.

This might have been the practice of the most pious Papists, and, indeed, the Welsh had never been very enthusiastic about the Reformed Faith. But to the Revivalists, such goings on seemed appalling. Even the "nos weithian carm," the old-fashioned meetings on Saturday nights of young men and women for harp playing and singing, were scandalous in the eyes of these enthusiasts, and they ultimately banished the harp from Wales. Thomas Price, of Cwmdu, who ought to know, tells a story of an old harper, of Abergwessin, who, in his frenzy for the new ideas, hurled his beloved instrument beneath his bed, where it remained till time and dust had ruined it.

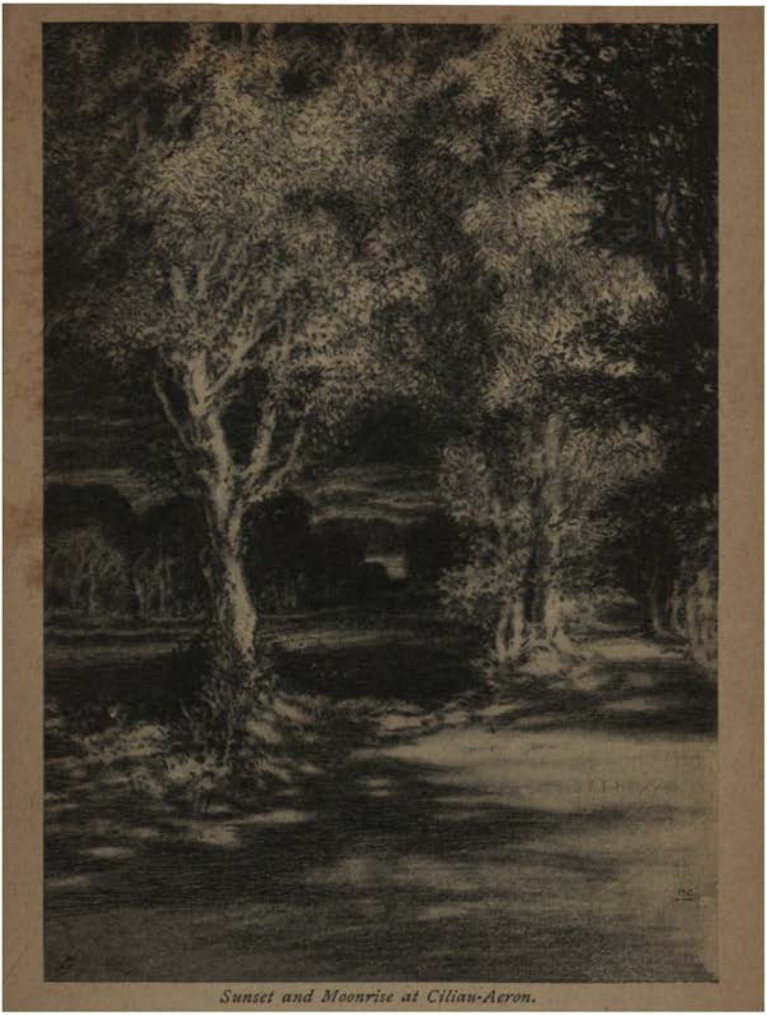
Rowlands and his bishop were, of course, soon at loggerheads. The former's out-door preaching was a heinous busi-

ness in his lordship's eyes, and he was finally ejected. But his disciples, who were as the sands of the sea, soon built him a chapel within sight of the church, and I am afraid to hazard the figures, from memory, of the enormous crowds that flocked to hear him, not only there, but in the many other places he preached in. I have myself been to Llangeitho to see his chapel, which, enlarged and modernised, still stands outside the village. But I confess to being startled on seeing a life-size and most realistic figure of the great Revivalist standing in the open air at the edge of his chapel yard, looking down upon the lane. Rowland's successor in the vicarage had, naturally, a bad time of it, his congregation, it appears, being composed of his sister and his clerk. The evangelist himself ministered for sixty years, and died in 1797.

Fine trees overhang our road in many places, not only oaks, which you may look for everywhere in South Wales, but ash trees of vast proportions, such as seem chiefly to flourish where hills mount high and streams run fast, and for me, as I look up through their thousand light leaves twinkling in the summer wind, have always a peculiar attraction. We pass the hamlet of Ystrad, and, beyond it, the mellow-looking, plain, old manor-house of Green Grove, standing on a pleasant slope and beneath stately timber, that includes some magnificent old fir trees, between the river and the road. High wooded hills rise on either side of the narrow valley, and the Ayron sings and sparkles between its alder-shaded banks. A few hundred yards beyond Green Grove there are three old birch trees. One would only notice them because veterans of that age and species are unusual in a low-lying meadow. But to one of them belongs a curious tale, illustrative of life in far-away Cardiganshire in the eighteenth century. I have some misgivings as to telling stories of local worthies who lived so recently in this part of the world. In many parts of England, the stock would probably have disappeared, and those who took their place have by this time almost persuaded themselves and

everybody else that they came over with William the Conqueror. But things do not move so fast in Cardiganshire; Celtic memories and genealogies are long, and I have some good reason for believing that nearly every Armiger from the head to the foot of the Vale of Ayron, and many, no doubt, in other vales, is a collateral or direct descendant of the culprit—if, indeed, you can call a man a culprit for doing his duty somewhat tardily and irregularly. However, I have gathered from acquaintances, who boast his blood, and allude to the business in jocund fashion, that the narration of his exploit is not likely to get me into trouble with his descendants.

Perhaps I have raised the reader's hopes too high, and the look of the old birch tree in the meadow, so often passed, has invested the tale with undue importance. But the gentleman in question happened to be High Sheriff in a year and at a period when this honourable function entailed more immediate responsibility than in these days for the disposal of local criminals. Now there was a certain workman, whose skill in various departments of rural labour was held in high esteem by the squire, though I do not know whether he actually lived on his estate or not. His principles, however, were not on a par with his abilities, at least we may assume so, as he was tried at the assizes for some offence which merited the extreme penalty of the law, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged. The Sheriff, however, thought it a thousand pities that the services of so valuable a craftsman should be lost to the community, and particularly to himself, for a trifling matter of lifting a sheep, or giving a man too hard a tap on the head at a tavern brawl. How it was managed I do not know, but no execution followed the sentence at Cardigan, and no immediate notice was taken of the omission, and some months afterwards the doomed man was leading an exemplary life on the Sheriff's estate in the vale of Ayron, and making himself invaluable to that worthy, stimulated no doubt by an abiding sense of gratitude. There were no local busybodies then to raise a stir or write to the papers when



Sunset and Moonrise at Ciliau-Aeron.

little liberties were taken by popular magnates, more particularly when such irregularities were of a popular description.

Both the Sheriff and the man, who in the eyes of the law ought to have been some time a corpse, had almost forgotten the delicacy of their situations, when suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, came down urgent inquiries from Government as to the execution, of which no report had ever reached them.

Then, says the local chronicler, the squire was frightened out of his wits, and lost his head, and indeed behaved with deplorable lack of judgment and humanity. His year of office had not elapsed, and with quite indecent despatch he had the unfortunate man seized and bound, and strung up in his presence to the rugged limb of this identical old birch, then no doubt in the fulness of its youth and strength. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the story; who indeed would do this much for the most luminous incidents of popular tradition? But there is the tree "whatever," and any passing jarvey will tell you all about it, though I had it myself on very much better authority than that. I need not say that the victim of this off-hand treatment cursed his quondam deliverer and present executioner heartily, cursed him and all that belonged to him and all that should come after him. It does not seem, however, that his dying anathemas amounted to much: at any rate they had no permanent effect.

Many pleasant seats, to whose former owners the Vale of Ayron owes much of the sylvan beauty which decks its lower slopes, succeed each other upon the further bank. Ty-glyn and Ty-glyn Aeron [1] lie close together on wooded heights above the stream. A mile below the level parklands of Llan Aeron, sprinkled with clumps of timber and black cattle, fill the vale, and across these sunny lawns the old church of Llanerchaeron lurks in the shadow of a wall of woodland. The hills here descend upon this scene of low ground beauty with much charm of outline, Trichrug rising on the north of it to an altitude of twelve hundred feet. And as we pass through the gap at its foot, the road is enfolded for some distance in a forest of

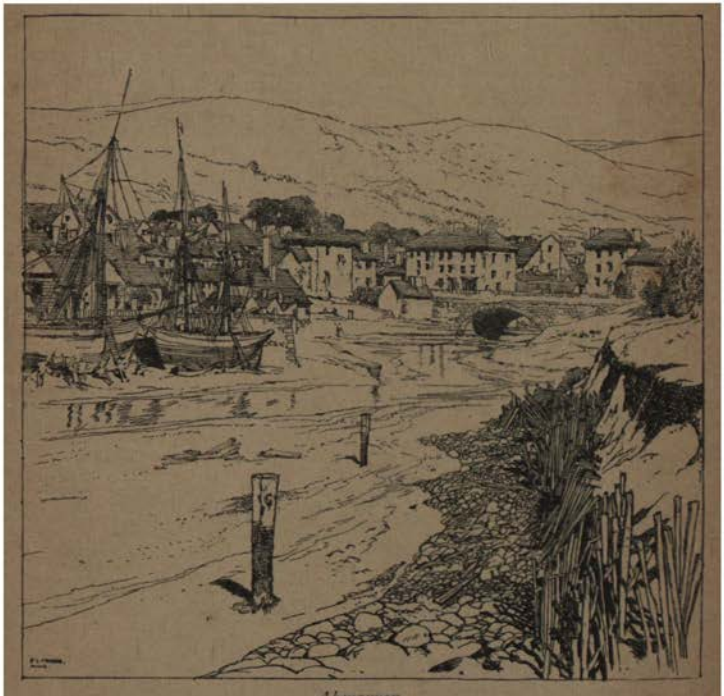
[1] The spelling of Ayron or Aeron is locally capricious and variable.

ancient and rugged oak trees, springing from a varied surface of moss and ferns and flowers, where even the August sunshine flickers fitfully, and the tinkle of falling water completes the charm of the groves of Hengeraint.

Aberayron now comes in sight, but a mile or two distant; a gap in the lofty hills, a flat strip of green fields and woods in the hollow, a church tower standing boldly up, and a few roofs faintly showing beyond them and the blue sea meeting the sky behind. Few little watering-places in the country have a more charming appearance from the landward side. There are some pleasant villas at the entrance to the town, and the Ayron plunges down merrily between them under pendant boughs towards the tide. A noted little river at one time was this for salmon, sewin, and trout. It still contains the two first in their seasons, and the last at all times in a much decreased abundance. Fish poaching has always, I believe, been one of the "joys of Ayron's Vale," and its swains are said to be capable of holding their own at it with the men of Rhayader, Llanidloes, or Machynlleth. And rivers for some reason do not stand poaching as they once did.

The little town stands wholly on the flat. It is very small, has a harbour formed by the river's mouth, and does a small coasting trade and a modicum of fishing. In August it becomes a watering-place, and in that month, at any rate, the reverse of aristocratic. The "rugged miner" from Glamorgan's "sunless caves" is greatly in evidence, and in the height of the season the exotic population is said to average something like two and a half to each available bed. There are, I am sure, select quarters in Aberayron that do not compete in this class of entertainment. But the most conspicuous visitors by far are the Joes and Jills of subterranean associations, and you will see them enjoying themselves with salt water, music, or cwrw in not unmirthful fashion; part-singing, at which the Welsh peasant is such an adept, being of course a distinguishing feature of the day's entertainment. What the evening may

bring forth I know not. There is a rope ferry, or bridge rather, swung in mid air across the harbour, over which a wooden box, calculated to hold two people, runs on wheels. This is a source of convenience as well as much innocent mirth. It is not suited for old ladies with weak nerves, but at all



Aberayron.

times of the day you may see uninitiated nymphs with rosy cheeks and sound digestions being launched into space with shrieks of fearful joy. I have never seen anything quite like this, nor indeed do I know any little seaside place at all resembling Aberayron either in its architecture or in the curious nature of its "visitors' list."

From its shingly beach there is a striking view northwards over the level coastline which stretches for a brief distance along the centre of Cardigan Bay. Beyond the flats the cliffs begin again, rising headland behind headland to the Bay of Aberystwith, and faint and dim against the sky the shadowy mass of Cader Idris can be readily seen in tolerable weather. Southward, the rocky headland, on which stands the rival, but more aristocratic, watering-place of Newquay, five miles away, catches the surf and shuts out the distance.

The hardy traveller who likes riding over steep and fearsome roads, and making acquaintance with localities which, even if they had no other merit, have that of being known of no man —may go back to Lampeter *via* Newquay with some profit—a ride of twenty miles or more. Not that the first part of the journey along the sea-coast road which leads by perpendicular and devious routes to Newquay is by any means untravelled or unknown. It toils long and painfully up the steep coastline, and, passing through the villages of Henfynyw and Ffos-y-ffin —the last a wonder in some of its thatched cottages—descends in time through a beautifully wooded valley, cleft by a mountain stream to the picturesque cove and headland on which the white houses of Newquay cluster in some strength. This is a far more attractive place in itself than Aberayron—the steep rocky hill on which it is terraced giving abundance of scope for variety of aspect and the surf breaking finely at its feet. While the cottage part of the town, too, is decidedly picturesque, the villa portion is neat and clean. It is frightfully steep, but half-way down the slope, commanding fine views of the sea and coast, is a pleasant old-fashioned hostelry to which certain judicious families, I am told, resort year after year even from London: a distinction which any place sixteen miles away from the remotest railway station (Newcastle Emlyn) you can select in England or Wales may well be proud of. But it is on another sixteen miles, of, for the most part, lonely road, passing through nowhere—between this and Lampeter—that

you will see the heart of Cardiganshire in very truth. Yet there is almost no solitude in the county of the unenclosed mountain description away from its eastern borderland. It is all occupied by the white or yellow or pink washed homesteads, thin on the land and near to heaven though they may sometimes be—where sturdy farmers of fifty or a hundred acres, and their own acres sometimes, backed by their sturdy wives and, though not so often nowadays, by their sons and daughters—work out their frugal and independent lives. And there the parsons, the preachers and the pigs, as the ancient local pleasantry has it, are turned out in their traditional abundance.

It has not perhaps been altogether social or intellectual ambition that has caused this remarkable fecundity. A holder of a fifty acre, or thirty pound "farm," as they would say down here, whether tenant or freeholder, has not much opening for more than one son, his successor, that is to say, upon his holding. Among an intensely Welsh rural community careers in the outer world are for obvious reasons not so ready of access as with a similar class elsewhere. But in the aspiring preacher and parson this provincialism is no drawback and in some respects even an actual merit. Higher education in Wales, as we have seen, is cheap, and industry will usually do the rest. Frugally as the typical Welsh farmer lives and closely as he attends to his business, he is by no means the day-long serf of plough and spade that some of his contemporaries are, in England and the Colonies. Stock being his main support, he has no occasion to kill himself with grinding manual toil. His days are usefully full, but though his labour bill is small he has no occasion, like the dependant of wheat and barley and market crops, to feel that every one of them is too short. Fairs and markets make frequent outings, while the bargains there engaged in are among the joys of his life, particularly in Cardiganshire. Of course times are not so good as they were once; and it is said on all hands that the land is not as well

done. Indeed there is no labour. I have again and again had described to me by middle-aged or elderly people, who formed a part of it, the old farm-house life of Cardiganshire. In those days the holder of a £50 or £60 farm would have three or four men and boys and as many women as servants, all living in the house, and eating at his table. The women's wages were three or four pounds a year, and those who could earn a trifle more had uncommon pride in the accomplishments for which they were thus compensated above their fellows and often saved money. At one end of the dinner table sat the head labourer, at the other the head female servant of the rustic establishment, the distinction which involved the helping of the *cowl*, or the porridge, or cutting of the loaf being jealously preserved for seniority. This at least where the farmer and his wife ate at a separate table in the same kitchen instead of at the common board, which seems to have been very usual. Meat has been in the past less eaten by the people of Cardiganshire than by any other peasantry, and their sturdy frames are no bad advertisement for such abstinence. *Cowl* is a Cardiganshire speciality and took till lately, and does even yet, to a great extent the place of ordinary beef or bacon. *Cowl* is the part or whole of an animal, usually one whose marketable value was doubtful, a cow of mature years, for instance, stored in salt or brine. From this pieces are cut daily to season the broth or supplement the milder diet which form the staple of the Cardiganshire rustics' food. Buttermilk, oatcake or Bara ceirch, and porridge were all in constant use. But if the extreme simplicity of diet which distinguished old Cardiganshire is somewhat ameliorated it must be remembered that now the farmer has only himself and family to feed, whereas in former days with a large team of servants economy was more urgent. I have often heard it said that the prodigious amount of salt which Welsh housewives—when not in touch with an outer market—even yet put into their butter is due to an old precaution against their dependants making too free

with it. In former days there was a class of labourer apart from and beneath the farmer, as in England. Of recent years, as already observed, this has practically vanished and gone away to seek more remunerative employment. A certain number of peripatetic workmen from Ireland and elsewhere come round in midsummer for hay and harvest. But when you see a jovial throng, as you often do in Cardiganshire, following behind the "reaper" or under the shade of a hedge partaking of the "ambr" or eleven o'clock snack—the extra helpers will quite likely be relatives or friends taking their holiday from shop, or mine, or factory, in a fashion not unpleasant to themselves and vastly useful to their short-handed entertainers.

I have alluded to the freeholders of Cardiganshire. There are, I believe, more of these yeomen here than in any county in Great Britain. It is an ideal situation and I am fully under the spell of its attractions, real and theoretic, and have seen much of it in newer countries where the "unearned increment" always looms large and is a tremendous stimulus. In this country it does not of course exist, and it must be a very open question whether the tenant or the owner of fifty acres is the better off. Cardiganshire affords an admirable example to the lay enthusiast, who being probably a townsman is biased unconsciously by sentimental notions that would often be incomprehensible to the subject of his theories. If you want to make uncompromising Tories of people turn them into fifty acre proprietors. Sprinkled sparsely among their renting neighbours and relatives, their instincts are somewhat chained and bridled, but if you ever have a solid county of them you will see what you will see! But it is for the most part the people who hate Tories that are so ardent for sowing this pernicious seed, and this is very funny. It is a common saying, whatever it may be worth, that if the Welsh Church were disestablished, Wales would once again become a solid block of Conservatism. But if, in addition to this, the Welsh yeomanry were to become the owners of their farms—a condition not, I fancy,

seriously desired—the Toryism of the Principality would assume a hide-bound aspect such as a Conservative ministry of the modern type could not contemplate as a supporter without dismay. The Cardiganshire freeholders are very many of them of quite recent date, large estates near Llandyssil and elsewhere having been sold in farms. Nobody possessed of an elementary acquaintance with rural economy needs to be reminded of the troubles that beset them. The interest of purchase money is often higher than the rent—as it is in Canada, where, however, a probable rise in freehold value cheers the mortgagor. The payment, too, is inexorable. Moneylenders are much worse than landlords. Repairs and improvements have to be contrived from within and no help is forthcoming. It is very doubtful indeed, whether tenants of some generations standing, who are the rule in Wales, would regard a change to ownership, with the most reasonable burdens inevitable to it, in the light of an unmixed blessing. His farm is quite sufficiently the home of his family and his ancestors to satisfy the sentiment of the average tenant. The days are gone by when rents would be capriciously raised on his own improvements, and the sitting tenant sits in Wales practically without fear of disturbance so long as his rent, generally a fair one, is forthcoming. A part of this must inevitably be returned in repairs, which the freeholder has to do out of his own pocket. One is accustomed to think of the Welsh landlord as the most blest among landlords, since unlet farms or nominal rents are virtually unknown. But the owner of two thousand acres, at 15/- to 25/- an acre, in Wales, has probably twenty to thirty different sets of small farm buildings to keep in repair, instead of half a dozen larger ones, and that the tax on his income is relatively greater will be obvious to the most unsophisticated land reformer.

When we have climbed the long, long hill from Newquay and reached the thinly-peopled upland that stretches away to the east and to the south, a backward glance will show the

bold nature of the coastline. Lofty sheep pastures rolling southwards towards Pembrokeshire hang over the margin of the sea, which sparkles here and there beyond the mouth of tortuous ravines where silvery brooks go gurgling downwards to the deep. Above one of these glens you will see that place of euphonious name, Llandisiliogogo, whose vanished castle a lady once defended with great renown. She was a daughter of that Ranulph Earl of Chester of great name in Welsh conquests; and was celebrated for her beauty and was relieved of her peril by the gallant Milo Fitzwalter, who rushed across Wales to her rescue. The road is excellent to the Synod Inn, some four miles from Newquay, which is natural enough, seeing that it is the only artery which links the delectable little watering place with the outer world at Newcastle Emlyn. Here at the Synod five ways meet, and the one that leads to Lampeter is travelled but little and is very indifferent. It is these five ways which alone give importance to the Synod Inn, a modest wayside hostelry in a lonely, windy situation. I was myself ministered to there by a comely maiden speaking good English, who for a portion of each day, through sunshine or storm, drove his Majesty's Mail from a distant village to meet the postal delivery. She was properly proud of being in the direct employ of the authorities at St. Martin's-le-Grand, yet, like all public servants, regarded it as her privilege to speak her mind regarding the pitiable condition of that down-trodden body. She entertained me with a spirited narration of her adventures with her cart and pony among the snow storms and deep drifts that I can well believe make winter on these bleak uplands a thing to be remembered by those who have to face it. She informed me, moreover, that she was responsible, not only for the delivery, but for the distribution of the letters in the aforesaid parish, and hired a postman, or rather a postwoman, to execute this less exhilarating task. She gave me to understand that the strange vocation had devolved upon her by descent—that the post had been in her family for two or three generations, and as she was

the sole survivor it was, I gathered, a point of honour to continue it in her own person rather than devote herself to that more natural career which the swains of Cardiganshire, if they have a particle of taste, do not fail, I should imagine, to urge.

It is a wild upland country this, half-tamed by civilisation in the days when such conquests were better worth the making. For miles there is not a tree in sight but a few wind-smitten specimens that, turning from the blast, offer faint protection to the wide-scattered homesteads. It generally blows up here, I should imagine, and the patchy oat crops, as yet but half-ripe, bend in the sharp sea breeze that at the same time drives the shadows of the clouds at racing pace over the humpy table land. From its very poverty, perhaps, the land is gay with varied colours at this season of the year. The heather still blooms lavishly on the roadside banks, and wherever drainage or fencing have halted for a space, the whole interval is a blaze of purple bloom mingled here and there with the gleam of the gorse. In spite of grain and turnips, meadows and pastures, and the bank fences which have enclosed them for three or four or five generations, nature still seems to resent the process, and looks but half-subdued. The curlews still find delight here, and their wild alarm notes come floating down the wind. If it is a somewhat sad country when the distance is shut out and the sea mist is on the hill; there is little enough of melancholy in the prospect when the sun is shining and the skies are clear. For on this curiously remote though habitable upland you seem to be on the very roof of the world. Nearly the whole course of the Teify valley from the Ellenith Mountains to the sea can be followed by the outline of its ramparts, and far away beyond it to the south the lofty uplands of North Pembroke lay their misty forms against the sky. No country houses with embowering woodlands relieve the severe simplicity of life on this high central plateau of South Cardigan, or the narrow valleys that wind through or from it. Indeed, the valleys of

the Teify and the Ayron, or their immediate neighbourhood virtually monopolise the entire wealth and education of the county so far as residence goes. There are some good physical reasons for this, but a skeleton map of Cardiganshire with the country seats pricked upon it would present quite a remarkable appearance. Roughly speaking, the county may be described as a strung bow, the string being the sea-coast, the mountains the bow itself, the Vale of Ayron an arrow fixed in it, and the vale of Teify following the woodwork from near the arrow head to its extremity. Eliminating the top angle for the Aberystwith country, and along the curve of the bow and the line of the arrow—allowing of course a mile or two of latitude on either side—you will find practically the whole upper class of the county, a fairly numerous one for a country that attracts few well-to-do strangers as permanent residents. Nor, curious to say, are there any country seats, or scarcely any, upon the long and generally picturesque sea coast.

One might wonder, too, how all this fencing and ditching could have been accomplished within what was really a limited period. But here is a lease of the year 1797, a mere type of innumerable others, which will throw some light on it. It relates to the farm of Bwlch Mawr, near Llanwenog, on the edge of this very district. The lease is for "three lives and twenty-one years," the rent is £40, plus a hundred eggs, ten couple of fowls, one goose, and the carting of coal for the landlord. The point, however, is that the tenant agrees to put up forty perches of bank fence every year, "four feet at the top, six feet at the bottom, and planted with thorns."

One can well fancy all this interior country a rare stronghold of those old superstitions which Cardiganshire clung to with more tenacity than any county in Wales. More spacious or wilder skies for those weird dogs the Cwn Annwn to hunt and howl across after flitting souls could not be wished for. The Canwylcorph, or corpse candle, which flickered at night time on roads which would shortly be traversed by the funeral train of

the individual to whose homes they flitted; the Cyoewraeth, that grizzly female with uplifted bony arms, who appeared at dusk in solitary places; and the sin-eaters, that most terrible of all the real or fancied accomplishments of a primitive, superstitious people flourished here. The sin-eaters' trade, even by those who had complete faith in it, was regarded with horror. Its experts were pariahs, and lived alone in waste places, which were given a wide berth by the passing rustic. But their aid was often invoked all the same, and the fashion of it, like the belief in it, was ghoulish. To be brief, food was placed on the breast of a corpse which the sin-eater consumed amid mysterious mutterings to the effect that he thereby took upon his own soul the sins of the dead, and was prepared to suffer the penalty. The repulsion he excited, even among those who invoked his aid, was so great that when he had finished his job and received his fee, he was driven out of doors with the kicks and cuffs of his employers. The ignorance of the Welsh peasantry, even fifty years ago, makes somewhat startling reading, seeing that the religious Revival had been at work even then for some generations. But Blue Books do not write for picturesque effect, and are nothing if not serious. The report by a Government Commission on Welsh schools lies before me, and is by no means dull reading. We learn from it, for instance, that at one school, out of nine children questioned, seven of them thought our Saviour was of Welsh nationality, and those that had heard of His crucifixion thought it took place in England. At another small school in Carmarthenshire none of the children were aware that there was any future state! In the same county, his Majesty's inspector was informed that Pontius Pilate was the husband of the Virgin Mary, and he reports that the schoolmasters, who very frequently taught their class in the nave of the parish church, were as often as not broken down farmers of no education; and these are but extracts culled at random. Wizards flourished too up till the middle of the century. There was a notorious character near Cayo in Car-

marthenshire, who drew people from all over South Wales. He could divine at sight what the ailment and symptoms of his visitors were, which struck them as sufficiently marvellous to assure their faith against his many failures to relieve the maladies themselves. The secret of his magic, however, was a very simple one, but it was practised on a simple people, and seems to have escaped detection successfully. His wife used to receive the patient and lead him to discuss his ailment while the magician himself listened through a crack in the wall, so, when the real interview took place, and the wizard put his finger on every ache and pain of the sufferer, one can well imagine that the latter was properly impressed. Another couple, who occupied a turf hut on a common in North Cardiganshire, had by 1840 achieved a great reputation and received visitors from far and near. In this case the man was a cipher, and half imbecile, the lady being the physician, and her system consisted of mere charms and mystifications.

But I have gossiped far too long on this Cardiganshire byway, which I fully intended to traverse in a page or two. But then it is precisely on lonely roads such as this, where life is primitive and aloof, that these kind of thoughts seem to rise more readily to the mind.

Llechrhyd Bridge.

CHAPTER IX

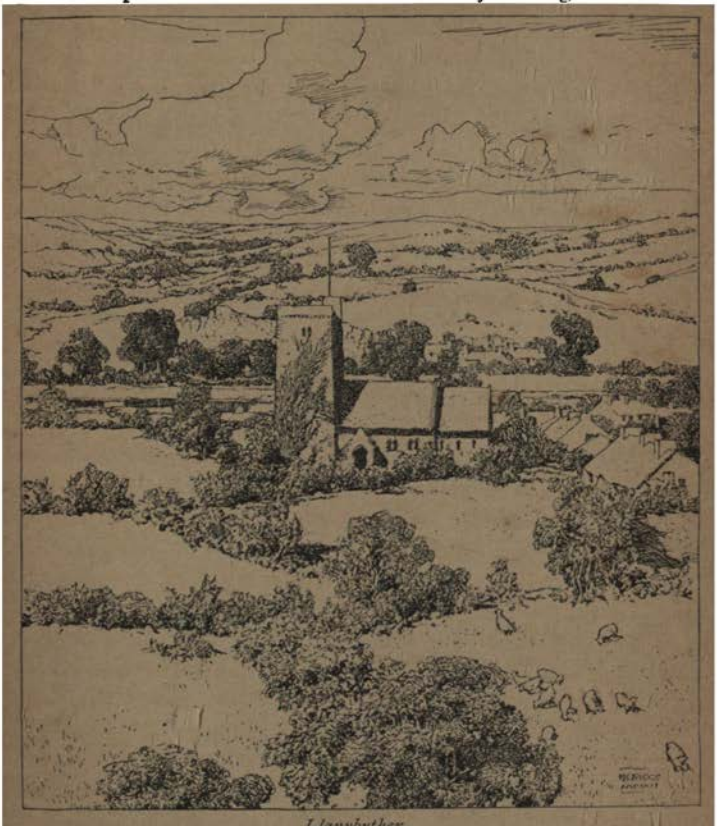
Now the Teify valley, though we followed it up in a former chapter to Strata Florida, and to its egress from the mountains, only assumes importance as a district and an artery at Lampeter. From here it bends round, forming the county boundary to Cardigan and the sea. The distance is over thirty miles, and as I must compass it within the limits of this chapter, it is quite evident that we must hasten more, and gossip less, than hitherto. Yet on leaving Lampeter by the best of two good roads, the one on the Cardiganshire side of the river, I am brought to a stop almost immediately by the long-closed entrance of that avenue of limes mentioned in the last chapter in connection with the ruined mansion of Peterwell. The old avenue is now but a cow pasture. Many of the great trees have entirely vanished. Others have been cut off by storm or axe, and sprouted from their stump into a profusion of interlacing saplings. The wreck of the Manor-house stands in a meadow;

a few tall fragments of grey wall, overtopped and caressed by the boughs of lofty trees, whose roots tangle and twine among the weedy cavities which once were well stocked cellars. Far reaching upheavals in the meadows' surface show the extent, and are significant of the grandeur, that distinguished the house of Peterwell. It seems a curious story, and no one but a stray individual, with an antiquarian turn, knows or cares anything about it. The race that ruled here is long extinct, or virtually so, though this, after all, is a common story. But that of the house is by no means so, for though a ruin now this hundred years, the span of life it enjoyed was briefer even than that, and it was abandoned in the freshness of its prime and pride.

Now the Lloyds of Maesyfelin, or as anglicised, Millfield, and Peterwell were very famous people. Lampeter is to-day a place of note, and very emphatically a town, if only a small one, while Peterwell is but a neglected ruin in the fields near by. In the seventeenth century, Maesyfelin stood still nearer to it, on the other side, and Lampeter was but a village, tributary to the big house, as, in still earlier days, it had been tributary to a castle, which stood on a tump, now within the college grounds. No one knows the exact site of Maesyfelin, because the stones were removed and utilised for the erection of Peterwell. The Lloyds would seem to have been as gay as they were great, and by their partiality for life's excitements brought themselves to an untimely end. But then they also had been cursed, apparently with more effect, and that, too, by a holy man, no less a one indeed than Vicar Pritchard, of Llandovery, and for a deed much darker than the one perpetrated by the impetuous sheriff in the Vale of Ayron.

Now it so happened that Vicar Pritchard had a son, a well-favoured youth, of whom both he and his Llandovery flock were exceeding proud, while the Lloyds of Maesyfelin had a daughter who was at least as fond of the young man as any of his father's flock, and he was a constant visitor at their house,

in the ordinary course of social life. But the attachment, which was mutual, was kept secret, not unnaturally, perhaps, since so proud a race would be unlikely to regard such an



Llanybyther.

alliance with much favour. Clandestine meetings are the inevitable recourse of true love under difficulties, and this case was no exception to the rule. The lover, as he rode down the hill beyond the Teify, the same that we descended on our way to

Lampeter from Llandovery, used to look anxiously for the fluttering of a handkerchief at a certain window in the house, as a signal that the young lady would be at the accustomed tryst.

Perhaps they grew too confident. At any rate, the loving pair were discovered, one luckless day, by the fiery sons of Maesyfelin, and terrible was the vengeance. The too rash Lothario was tied, head downwards, on his own horse, which was then started on its road homeward with whips, and covered the eighteen miles, only too surely and too quickly, bearing a lifeless load into the horrified town of Llandovery. One version has it that the Lloyds accompanied their victim all the way to Towy Bridge, and hurled his corpse into the river. I have one local acquaintance, on the other hand, who says there is not a word of truth in the whole story, but then he is only an antiquary and genealogist. At any rate, a stanza has come down to us, commemorating the rage of the men of Llandovery, and the effects of the curses of the bereaved father on the house of Maesyfelin are plain enough for any one to see, in the forgotten site of the original mansion, and the somewhat uncanny ruin of the successor at Peterwell.

> "The curse of God on Maesyfelin fall,
> On root of every tree, on stone of every wall,
> Because the flower of fair Llandovery town
> Was headlong cast in Teify's flood to drown."

It is five miles to Llanybyther, the first village down the river. The road thither, which hugs the valley for the most part, is broad and shady, and the surroundings unremarkable, rich, and pastoral. Across the vale, four or five meadows in width, the Carmarthen hills slope gently upward. Between us and them, the Teify sweeps in wide curves, flashing in broad, gravelly shadows, or sleeping in deep, black pools, where fine trout lie beneath the alders, and regard with true August imperturbability the winged food fluttering over them.

There is a bridge at Llanybyther, which it is well to cross if

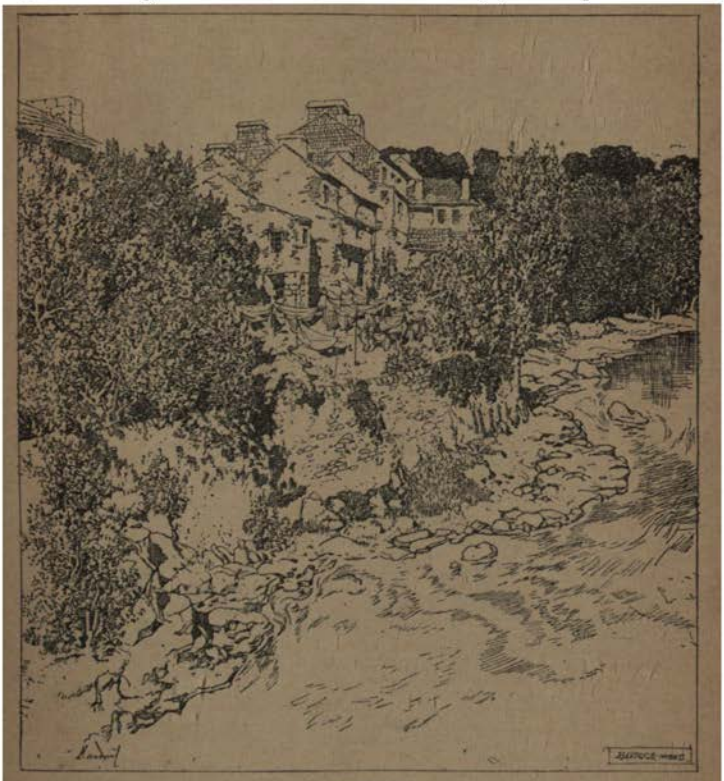
bound for Llandyssil as we are. There is also an inn sufficiently comfortable for the hardy angler, and a fine old church. If I have represented the Teify valley as a continuous artery of travel as it should be and as, in fact, it appears on the map, I have made a grievous error. Nowhere in South Wales is such a thing so badly needed, but nowhere in Great Britain do I know of a more exasperating hiatus than that which divides the upper valley from the lower, and in some ways more important, section, generally known as Teify Side. Along both upper and lower valley good roads, as well as a railroad, follow the stream. As they approach within about three miles of each other, however, between Llanybyther and Llandyssil, they each and all leap inland into the heart of a most precipitous country on the Carmarthen side. Now the junction of Pencader, already mentioned, is the meeting point of the Great Western and the M. and M., and a traveller to Carmarthen or London, whether from the upper or lower valley, has little to complain of. But a descent of the Teify valley by train, which on a map looks so simple and pleasant, entails delay on Pencader platform, both going and returning, for such an unconscionable period that railway connection is locally regarded as non-extant, and those who have neither horse nor cycle walk, thereby saving both time and money. But I am not sure that the man on wheels of some sort does not feel this preposterous and heart-breaking *détour* most keenly. The route on the Cardiganshire side is even worse, so I will say nothing of it; but after following down the valley on the other, from Llanybyther for a mile or two, the highway suddenly flinches from the route that nature would seem to offer it, and, dropping to the status of an average lane, starts out on a wild, adventurous career over a country that contrives to be both precipitous and uninteresting. To aggravate the grievance, the river scenery in the vale below, which has narrowed considerably just as you have to leave it, is singularly pleasing; the Teify below Maesycrigiau plunging down rocky channels beneath wooded

hills with exceeding picturesqueness. When you do come in touch with the valley again, after much labouring over stony and perpendicular ways, you get some slight recompense in the charming picture which the village of Llandyssil presents to the eye, lying some hundreds of feet below you on the river's brink. But till then you have had none whatever for the superfluous trials of a country that you did not in the least want to explore. If you are a stranger, and have pinned your faith on an ordinary map, you will probably be very sore as well as very hot, as with a tight grip on the brake you drop down the long precipice into Llandyssil. I have travelled this road very often indeed. Sometimes I have been hot and sometimes wet. On all occasions I have left the vale at Llanybyther in a normal if not happy frame of mind. But neither use nor custom has availed aught in helping me to retain any measure of tranquillity as far as the ridge top above Llandyssil. I can enjoy a long day's ride over rough and steep roads when it is inevitable and has the usual compensations, but to be turned neck and crop out of a valley whose charms you are anxious to enjoy, and off a good road and sent clambering about for miles without recompense of any kind, and for no apparent reason but the deplorable lack of judgment of primitive road-makers is a sore trial.

Llandyssil is a large and venerable village, with a single street straggling along a high bank. Beneath it the Teify frets in its rocky bed to race afterwards beneath a one-arched bridge in a channel so contracted that it is difficult to imagine it the same river which, many miles higher up, spreads into pools so wide at times that the greatest effort with a trout rod will hardly cover them. And by this same token Llandyssil is the best fishing station for a stranger on the river. There is a hotel here, too, of a superior kind, which lays itself out for the business of salmon and trout fishing, and has rights and facilities for both, I fancy, sufficient for the needs of the class it caters for. It is curious though that no sewin ascend the Teify, seeing that

they run up every other stream in south-west Wales, and that this one as a salmon river is second only to the Wye and Usk.[1]

Now there are to be found here and there in Wales men of the working class who live laborious days, but spend their



Llandyssil.

evenings and their scanty hours of leisure in the pursuit of abstract and unmarketable knowledge, and their spare shillings in the purchase of strange books. Verse writers are of course

[1] I believe owing to some recent facilities a few sewin now ascend the Teify.

confessedly numerous, but the local bard has the sympathy and admiration of a considerable following, and has also the stimulus of competition. But the village antiquary, genealogist, and enthusiast for rare books has no such outside encouragements, and is altogether a much more remarkable person than the village bard. His tastes have to feed upon themselves, for circumstances almost always condemn these humbler students to isolation in their hobby. So far as I know the type is scarce in England, at any rate in such an ardent and advanced condition, but I myself know many in Wales. They may be country postmen, mechanics, or small tradesmen, but they will know the pedigree of every family of consequence in the neighbourhood (what a terror such a man would be in modern Blankshire!) A trifling tangle of two hundred years' standing in the genealogy of the Joneses of Plasmawr will keep him awake at night, and his first half-holiday our friend will walk miles to consult the register of a distant church on the knotty point. Nor will he be thoroughly happy till he has straightened out the Joneses the whole way down from Elystan Goddraeth or Ednyved Vychan to his own complete satisfaction. And this from no personal devotion whatever to the aforesaid family, who, in their turn, may be wholly absorbed in a pack of harriers and perfectly indifferent to the doings of their forbears. Our enthusiast will have a whole sheaf of pedigrees at home, and a Welsh pedigree is a thing to itself, and has a sort of abstract interest for Welshmen such as no ordinary English genealogical tree commands outside those immediately concerned. A Welshman of this bent of mind, if he thinks you are sympathetic, will tell you that he has a collection of pedigrees at home and would like to show them to you, just as an Englishman might offer to show you his postage stamps or his photographs.

But the local genealogist of this sort is of necessity much more than this. The epochs of history and its dates are fairly clear in his mind. He will talk about John or William Rufus, the first Edwards, or Henry VII. with a familiarity that an average member of Parliament might be thankful for; but a familiarity

gained rather from a Welsh and genealogical point of view. He will delve in cottages too and ferret out old papers, accounts, memoranda, anything that bears upon it the halo or the faded ink of age, and they will be valuable in his eyes on that account alone. Legends and traditions will of course be part of our antiquary's stock, but if of the genealogical type he will be

Pentrecourt.

critical on such matters, and a little scornful. I know one working man well who has not only a good collection of curious old Welsh books, but is recognised as about the best judge of them and of their values in his county. He is a native indeed of this very parish of Llandyssil, though not a resident—hence the impulse for this digression—and I have to thank him among other things for a curious old memorandum

connected with a Bidding, I think that of his own grandparents.

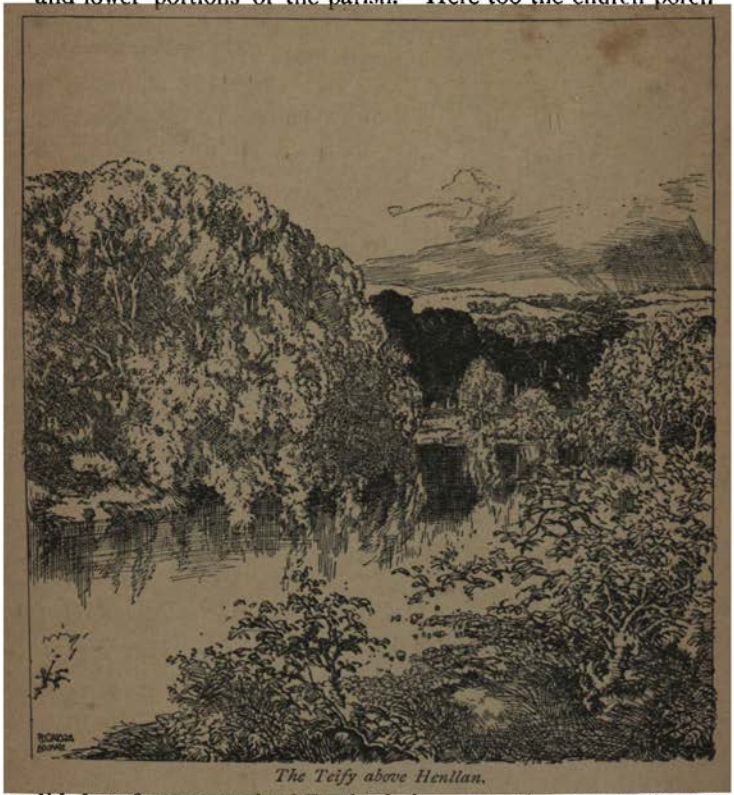
Now the Bidding was of course a time-honoured accompaniment to every rustic wedding in Wales. Notices of the happy event were served verbally, or otherwise, to every one in the neighbourhood, and all who were asked were expected to contribute a shilling, or more if they so chose, as a wedding gift, with the understanding that a like sum would be offered to the donors on a similar event occurring in any of their own households. It was in fact a kind of matrimonial insurance association, and supplied at the critical moment a most useful sum of money to a young couple starting in life. The list of William Williams of Pantygan in this case, is a very long one numbering 300 names. The great majority appear as the contributors of a shilling, and the total is over £17, which, in the year 1810, when a woman's yearly wage was £3 and a man's a shilling a day, would seem a substantial start. The old South Wales wedding in the farming class was of course an elaborate and dramatic function, such as we have no space to dwell upon here. It was a horseback ceremony chiefly and there was much galloping to and fro of young swains, formal demands for the bride, make believe abductions and hot pursuits from the church door, all ending amiably in a general carouse and the usual horseplay.

A quaint and picturesque sight too these groups of Welsh peasantry in their best attire must have been a hundred years ago, particularly the women in their neat dresses of wool, flax or linsey woolsey, their starched mob caps and the tall shining beaver hat surmounting all. There seems to have been an oblong cloak of red flannel with a black border, peculiar to Carmarthenshire and worn across the shoulders, which after the Fishguard invasion was known as the *Frenchmen's Terror*. The men of this period, says Meyrick, who writes from it, wore coat, waistcoat and breeches of coarse blue homespun cloth, and stockings of the same colour.

Radnorshire even then, however, cultivated a certain amount of individuality and affected a uniform colour of grey or drab. Nowadays even in remote Cardiganshire every vestige of local character has vanished from the people's dress, except among the older women. These, as I have before remarked, often wear a man's hat, though no longer a beaver, and black ribbon ear-flaps over a frilled cap, which, with the addition of a woollen shawl and market basket, presents at least a strong suggestion of bygone Wales. Statistics, moreover, give Wales a much larger share of really ancient ladies than any part of his Majesty's dominions, while a clever American, writing of South Wales, which he knew very well, about thirty years ago, descants much on the number of tall women in Carmarthenshire; a characteristic doubtless more notable from the towering beaver at that time universally worn.

Llandyssil, deep in its green woody gorge, by the here impetuous Teify, has already been the cause of considerable digression, but I cannot resist saying a word about those Homeric football contests that were regular events in the local calendar up to some fifty years ago. Not that such affairs were peculiar to Teifyside, but merely that I have come into possession at first hand of the details of these particular engagements. There were a good many more or less scratch games—but the great "fixture" of the year was Llandyssil *v.* Llanwenog, a place some way up the river. Good Friday seems to have been generally reserved for this important trial of strength and the church porch was the goal—in each case thus emphasising the old connection between village sports and the Establishment. The whole able-bodied male population of each parish, and they are both large ones, joined in the fray. After a dinner at noon, ampler than usual, as became a general holiday, the ball was thrown up on a ridge half-way between the two churches and over three miles from each. The rules were primitive and elastic, but the object was sufficiently definite, while the struggle continued as long as light permitted.

In Llanwenog there seems to have been a domestic fixture almost as important as their annual foreign match. This was the contest on the 12th of every January between the upper and lower portions of the parish. Here too the church porch



The Teify above Henllan.

did duty for one goal while the lodge gate of a country house served as the other, in this case two or three miles distant. Now it was the custom on this day for the farmers to give a big feast, nominally to the labourers who had worked for them in

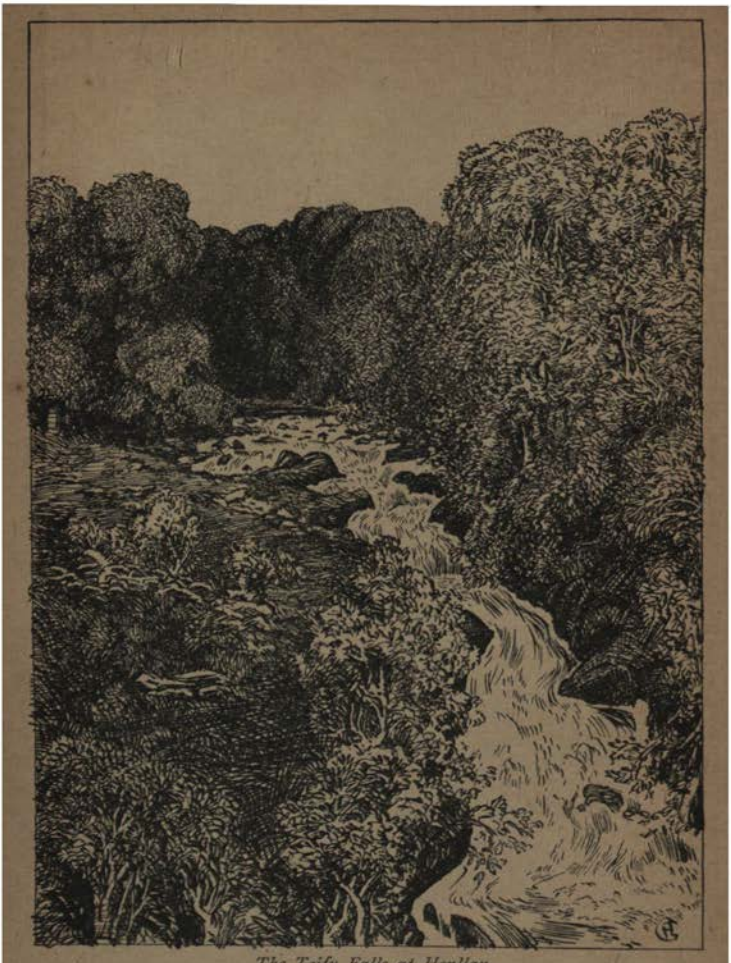
the previous harvest. Immediately the meal was concluded, soon after noon, sixty representatives of either end of the parish ripped off their coats and waistcoats for the fray. There was a special interest too about this game, a much stronger one than mere geography could create, inasmuch as most of the people at the upper end of the parish were connected by blood, while the same ties of relationship bound together the inhabitants of the district towards the Teify. It will be noted too that the number of players was limited, nor was any one outside the limit of this blood bond permitted to join in this particular game, which, as may well be imagined, was not unfruitful of incidents, painful and humorous. No doubt this rustic football was the outcome of Knappan, a much more serious form of amusement, about which we shall have something to say in Pembrokeshire.

The road now follows the valley again in comfortable and reasonable fashion, but still on the Carmarthen side, and at some distance from the Teify. At Henllan, five miles down, the river again rushes up to the brink of the highway, and follows it through a long maze of forest trees, roaring and tumbling in fine fury through channels of rocks so narrow and unyielding that in one place a single vigorous leap might clear this full-volumed river that has already run a course of over forty miles and been nourished by a score of lusty tributaries. A single ivy-covered arch here spans with ease the dark and seething waters, which, breaking away into further avenues of foliage below Llys-newydd, find space and rest again in the pleasant meadows of Dolffaiddfach. Three miles beyond, in a wider stretch of the valley, with green hills encircling it, lies on the Carmarthen bank the little town of Newcastle Emlyn, the terminus at present of the railroad. A contented-looking little place is this, of the Llandovery and Lampeter type, but a thought smarter perhaps, with a single wide street of considerable length crossing the Teify by a three arched

bridge to the old borough of Adpar, while on a high mound beyond, whose base is almost encircled by the river, stand the ruins of a once important castle.

The scanty walls before us were put up by that potent person, Sir Rhys ap Thomas, in Henry VII.'s time, on the site of an older fortress, which had led the stormy existence common to every post of offence and defence in this quarter of the world. Llewelyn the Great, when he was settling in high-handed fashion the affairs of that native Welsh confederacy which he had temporarily restored, made a long stay here. His grandson, the last Llewelyn, in the earlier part of his career, appointed Emlyn (for the "Newcastle" was a later addition in honour of Rhys ap Thomas's building) as a place of conference with the Commissioners of Henry III. for the purpose of arranging the terms of a peace treaty. But Patrick de Canton, the head of the English Commission, behaved in a fashion that not even the ethics of the time could excuse. For on realising that the strength of his escort was greater than that of the Welsh delegates, one of whom was Llewelyn's brother, David, he coolly laid an ambush for them, and with entire success, for the Welsh were routed and numbers of them slain. But on this monster of treachery fell retribution swift and dire. Since, the news spreading through Carmarthenshire, he found his return to its capital barred by men who had sprung to arms, vowing vengeance, and who thoroughly achieved it, killing him and his people to the last man. So ended this precious peace conference at Emlyn! The castle and barony, on the attainder of the grandson of Rhys ap Thomas in Henry VIII.'s time, fell to the Crown, was granted to the Vaughans of Golden Grove, and is now, like many other large areas in south-west Wales, the property of their successors, the Earls of Cawdor.

In the civil war the castle, very naturally, as being the property of so conspicuous a loyalist leader as Vaughan Lord Carberry, held for the King. It was closely besieged by the Parliamentarians, strong in their Pembrokeshire connections.



The Teify Falls at Henllan.

But Colonel Gerard, coming to its relief with a royalist force, fought a battle outside the walls in which he utterly routed the besiegers, killing two hundred and capturing three times as

many. With these bloody tales we will leave Newcastle Emlyn. Nothing could be more peaceful than its present appearance, green hills swell gently upward upon both the Cardigan and

Henllan Bridge.

Carmarthen side. Country seats are much in evidence, and the gentler nature of the landscape suggests more access to the country behind, and one is not surprised that this little town is

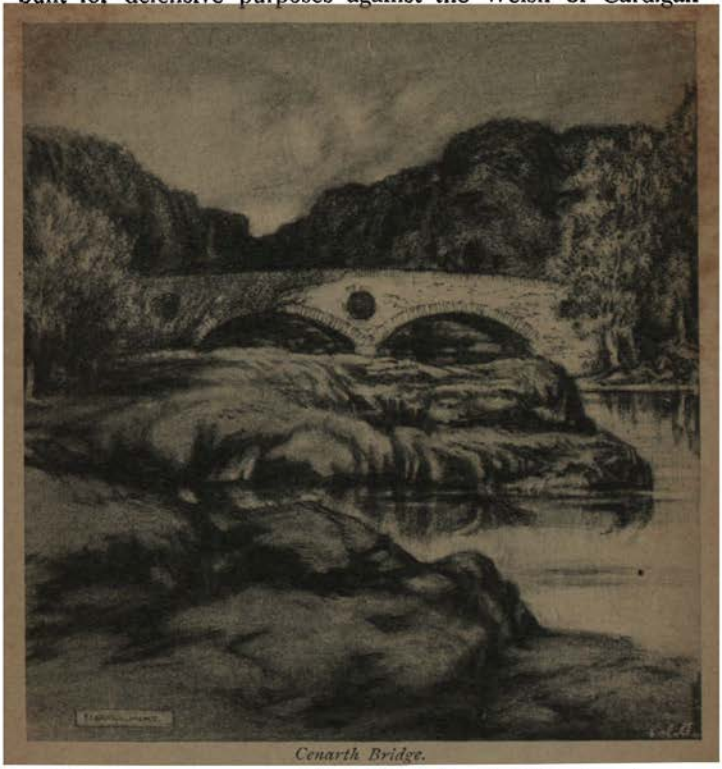
the centre of the thickest neighbourhood, in a social sense, in Cardiganshire. There is not even a scowl now left in the hapless fragments of its castle. Leaves and ivy flourish around their feet and the Teify, still as clear as when it left the gorges of Ystradfflur, makes a wonderful horseshoe bend almost encircling the castle mount, and having thus done duty in times past as a natural moat, rushes down with much commotion between the white houses of the town, and beneath the bridge which connects the old kingdoms of Ceredigion and Dyved. Still keeping the Carmarthen shore, the road leads us through pleasant scenery till we cross the river at the delightful village and bridge of Cenarth. Here the waters come boiling down through rocky channels and plunging over a quite historic salmon leap, pause below the bridge in a wide-spreading pool from whose rocky shores numbers of coracles are daily launched. The old bridge; the quaint village on the slope with its yellow and white houses and slate-stone roofs; the abundance of foliage spreading above roof-tree and river; the white flash of the waters pent in their rocky gorge—all combine to make a picture that has given much distinction to Cenarth, even if it had no other.

But, as a matter of fact, Cenarth[1] is the scene of the most luminous story of its kind in all Welsh history, to wit, the abduction of Nest, sometimes called the Helen of Wales. It was not any singularity in the action, a common enough one at that time, which made it unforgettable, but the rank and beauty of the lady herself, the audacity of the deed, and the wars it gave rise to.

Now Nest was the most beautiful as well as the most highly-born young woman of her day in South Wales, being a daughter of Rhys ap Tudor, the last of its princes who really enjoyed the privilege of absolute independence. After her father's death she became a ward of Henry I., who, enamoured of her charms, promoted her to the doubtful honour of becoming

[1] Some authorities make Cenarth near Pembroke the scene of this incident.

the mother of one, if not two, of his children. After this, in somewhat tardy recognition of his duty as her guardian, he married her to Gerald de Windsor, his constable at Pembroke, while she was still young and beautiful. Gerald had just built for defensive purposes against the Welsh of Cardigan



Cenarth Bridge.

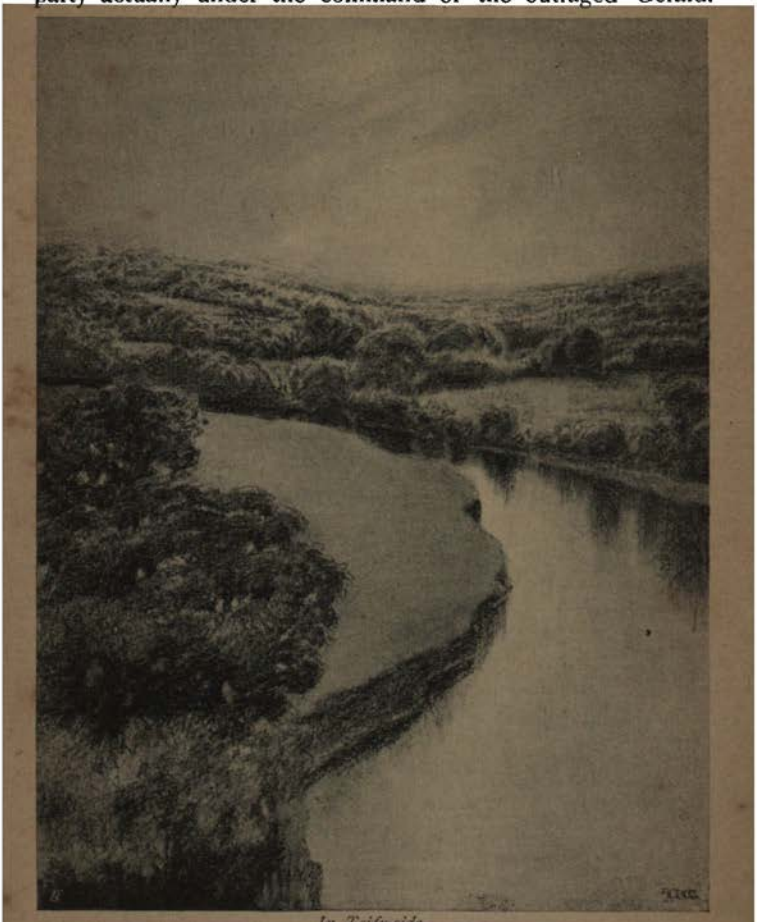
and Carmarthen a new castle at Cenarth, of which there is now nothing left. Here, when not at Pembroke, he lived happily with his young wife, the fame of her beauty being talked and sung of throughout Wales. She bore him three or four children, and it was while this apparently domesticated couple were in residence at Cenarth that Cadwgan, who though Prince of

Powys had also, in the curious jumble of that time, come into possession of Ceredigion, gave a feast in this his western dominion. Notabilities from all parts had flocked to this joyful function at Cardigan, and among them, of course, his none too orderly or reputable sons, Owen and Madoc. The Norman Gerald and his Welsh wife were not there, but the latter was of course a toast, her beauty was the subject of common talk, and we may be quite sure the bards would not fail to honour the most illustrious lady of their race. The curiosity of the headstrong and fiery Owen, who was comparatively a stranger, was aroused. He went to Cenarth, and, on the plea of a remote relationship, gained access to the presence of the lovely Nest.

She must have at least fulfilled his expectations, for the moment he got back to his father's castle he began laying his audacious plans. Gathering together a band of youths, as reckless no doubt as himself, he forced an entry by night into Cenarth Castle and made his way to the chamber where Gerald and his wife were sleeping. The former succeeded in escaping down a drain, while Owen and his friends, having set fire to the Castle, carried Nest and her children away into Powys, where an ancient and sequestered mansion, near Llangollen, is still shown as the spot where he hid them.[1] Poor Cadwgan was sorely perturbed. He sent to his unruly son in Powys, imploring him to restore the lady, but he implored in vain, and, as he foresaw, the King visited his son's iniquities on his own person. All Wales, honeycombed with connected interests obvious or subtle, was in a blaze. To shorten a story that in its entirety would mean several pages of Welsh history, Cadwgan was allowed to retain Cardigan on the condition of his firebrand son remaining in Ireland, and Nest restored to the arms of her husband. Owen, with his numerous friends and enemies, kept Wales in a lively ferment for years till, by a strange freak of retributive

[1] See *Highways and Byways of North Wales.*

justice, he was slain in a skirmish in the vale of Towy by a party actually under the command of the outraged Gerald.



In Teify-side.

Almost wherever the Saxon wanders in Wales, north or south, he will find in local literature some reference to the

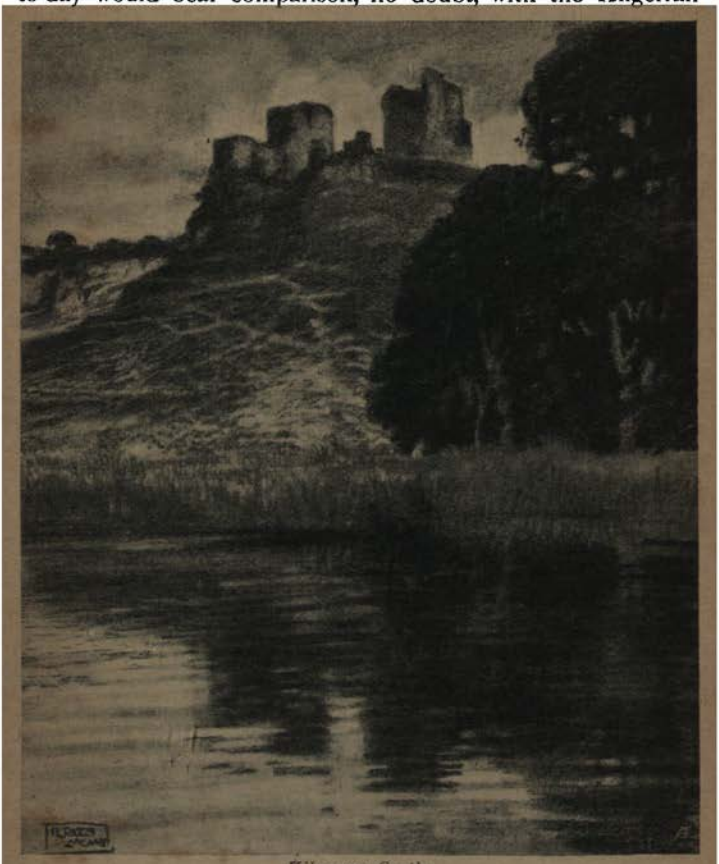
"Sons of Cadwgan." There are not many people, however, even in Wales, could give a reasonably lucid sketch of the uproar caused by these hot-headed young men who have gained a not very enviable immortality. As for Nest, she buried Gerald not long after the death of her abductor and married Griffith ap Rhys, by whom she had other children. Half the old families of note in South Wales, and many in Ireland and the West of England, can claim her as their ancestress. It was in the main her descendants who achieved that first Norman-Welsh conquest of Ireland, which the brutal Saxon gets the credit for when the Member for Ballyhooley descants to an attenuated house on the often mistold tale of Anglo-Irish conflict.

Loiterers on the bridge at Cenarth for the last two hundred years, so far as their thoughts have found utterance in print, have let them run chiefly on salmon, which is not surprising, seeing that this is the point where the king of fishes, who ascends this famous river in his thousands, has to "put his tail into his mouth," as the old writers say, and make his greatest effort. Here too, as I have said, in dilapidated one-storied cottages, that in their present condition would stir an artist to ecstasy, live a colony of coracle men who ply their nets on the lower reaches of the river, and are the natural enemies of every rod-fisher from Cenarth to Strata Florida. "Salmon is scarce and 6*d.* a pound," grumbled a highly intelligent person from this spot a hundred years ago, "instead of a penny a fish as it has heretofore been." Near seven hundred years agone, too, the grandson of Nest, standing on this very bridge, and after speaking of the leaping salmon, thus describes the spot, "The church dedicated to St. Ludoc, the mill, the bridge, the salmon leap, and an orchard with a delightful garden all stand upon the same plot of ground."

Llechryd, six miles below, is the next point of interest. The road thither on the Cardiganshire bank is all delightful. If it were in Hampshire or Sussex the Kodak snapper and the rural

impressionist would celebrate it weekly and monthly in journals and periodicals. Its praises beyond any doubt would be read continually wherever the English language is spoken. But from a Welsh standard, and judged from a scenic point of view only, Teifyside does not come up to one's expectations. One may well imagine the native loving it. What more could you wish for as a home, than a valley winding through fairly bold hills draped with rich foliage, threaded by a river, impetuous, musical and clear, and studded at no long intervals by country houses that for the most part are possessed of associations and history. Perhaps my qualified admiration is justified by the remark of one or two of the ancients who, yet not quite emancipated from the old standard, hail the lower Teify as very "English." Still you would have to get to West Hereford or Devonshire before you got a river valley at all comparable to this one; and for spots like Llandyssil, Henllan, Cenarth, or Llechryd you would have to pick very close indeed over the West of England. Llechryd is three miles from Cardigan. A straight reach of the river, by the roadside, terminates in an ancient ivy-covered bridge, and across the bridge the rich woodlands of Castle Malgrois rise above the stream. The Cardigan road here climbs out of the valley, through the village, and after struggling over the high ridge, round which the river winds, drops down again on the county capital, looking somewhat forlorn amid the bare hills which overlook the estuary on whose banks it lies. But the traveller by road to Cardigan would be well advised to cross the bridge at Llechryd, and take the longer and rougher road by Killgerran, for its castle is the most notable object to be seen anywhere upon the banks of the Teify. By so doing we are in Pembrokeshire for the first time, and after skirting the parklands of Malgrois in a couple of miles, are running down the long street of the above-mentioned village, a quaint Irish-looking place straggling along the summit of a precipitous hill. In feudal times it was a cor-

porate town within the Earldom of Pembroke. Though shorn of civic honours, and a poor place, no doubt, the Kilgerran of to-day would bear comparison, no doubt, with the Kilgerran



Kilgerran Castle.

which in the thirteenth century crouched behind the mighty castle that terrorised and protected it, and still forms its chief attraction.

Here as at Dynevor and Carregcennin we have something more than a ruin on a hilltop. For here too the great round towers of Marshal Earl of Pembroke crown the summit of an almost precipitous rock—and far below in a deep trough the tidal but narrow waters of the Teify wind beneath its feet and the wooded cliffs of Coedmore. The proper mode in which to view Kilgerran is beyond a doubt to take boat at Cardigan and ascend the river. You then look up from below at the grand old border fortress,—for this, be it remembered, was a frontier outlined against the sky upon the one side, and the steep curtain of foliage rising still higher upon the other. And you may wind on through the woodlands to Llechryd bridge—where boat navigation stops, and where a famous and royal salmon weir existed till the Rebecca rioters blew it up seventy years ago. Mr. Morris, in his *Welsh Wars of Edward the First*, tells us how, in one of the sieges of Newcastle Emlyn, huge stones were gathered on the sea-beach at the mouth of the Teify for the catapults, brought by boat to Llechryd, and dragged in "a hundred and twenty carts to Emlyn." An earlier castle was built at Kilgerran by the first Normans who adventured in this district—a Clare in all likelihood. The long list of Welsh and Norman warriors who wrested it in turn from one another till the Earl of Pembroke raised this impregnable fortress will not appeal to the reader, and indeed we must get on to Cardigan —that Ultima Thule of towns, that remotest at any rate of Welsh or English county capitals. Cardigan, though it has some romance of situation, and could tell thrilling stories of very ancient days, is to tell the truth a not very attractive place. It ought to be. The estuary which spreads over wide flats above, narrows like a bottle's neck at the town, where, flowing beneath an ancient stone bridge of five arches, it winds, in a contracted channel between hills, its short course to the sea. It has been a port of course for all time, and once no doubt did a comparatively roaring trade, and in still earlier times was only too familiar with the aggressive hulks of Dane, Irishman,

and Norman. A few craft of one or two hundred tons lie in the harbour, but a bar at its mouth has no doubt served as a check to any soaring ambitions that the Cardigan folk might ever have cherished for Aberteify as a future Cardiff or Liverpool. The town slopes sharply upward from the river. It contains but some 3,000 souls, and has neither sufficient commercial nor industrial activity to detract from such measure of picturesqueness as it enjoys. A woody knoll, carrying the ruins of its once very famous castle, stands finely over the estuary, and an ancient church seems to complete a picture that should stir one's enthusiasm. Perhaps it is my fault, but divested of its ancient associations the whole scene strikes me as somewhat forlorn and sad. If the buildings were even venerable it might cheer one up, but where they are so, near the water's edge, that is to say, they are slummy and depressing. higher up they are somewhat painfully Victorian. One cannot feel that Cardigan, so awkwardly situated, is well equipped for grappling with the twentieth century, even in the matter of cattle fairs, nor yet are its streets well attuned to reveries of Cadwgan ap Bleddyn or Gilbert de Clare. It has an air of having outlived ambition, and the people do not seem to move with sprightly and sanguine step. They have indeed had much to try them. For one thing Cardigan has been shorn of its honours as a county metropolis—and when the Assizes are held at Lampeter, 32 miles away, and a Cardigan juryman has to get there by road—for as we noted earlier the railroads are useless for the Teify valley—a more cruel illustration of the heaping of insult on injury could hardly be found. A native held forth to me with much eloquence on the pleasures of being summoned to Lampeter as a juryman, and what it cost him in time and money before he got safe home again. But of course the other towns of Cardiganshire, Aberystwith, and Lampeter had similar arguments, and the greatest convenience of the greatest number would hardly perhaps be served by bringing the whole county down to the mouth of the Teify—on bicycles or ponyback, in

spring carts or mail phaetons. So Cardigan, or Aberteify, as the Welsh call it, has come down in the world, and somehow looks it in spite of its modern buildings.

Involved as is the early story of most of the Welsh provinces, that of Ceredigion is calculated to fill the well meaning inquirer with despair. The Teify was not always the limit on the south-east, but otherwise it is so compact and isolated a country that the general reader, bewildered and perplexed by his struggles with the fragmentary story of the inner and southern provinces, might well imagine that here at least was the possibility of some connected tale. Putting aside all the earlier confusion with harrying Danes and Irish pirates, settlers, or saints, and coming to that Norman epoch, which is quite early enough for the average reader to concern himself with, in Welsh affairs, he will be met at once with what looks like a comforting sort of statement from his point of view. He will be told that Cardiganshire was among the earliest of the Welsh provinces to be subdued by Norman adventurers, and that Roger of Montgomery, having built the castle at Cardigan, did homage for the whole province to William Rufus. So far as Roger and Rufus were concerned, the whole business was pleasantly settled. But unfortunately a few years later we find that Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, Prince of Powys, already mentioned, not only in possession of Cardigan Castle, but enjoying himself there immensely and entertaining half Wales in those prolonged Christmas festivities which led, as we have seen, to the abduction of Nest. The Normans seem to have built the castles of Cardiganshire, chiefly for Welshmen to seize, and hold, and even fight one another for. There is no doubt that the Normans made themselves at times both formidable and disagreeable. But then, again, they were for long periods completely wiped out. Welsh princes were more than once recognised by the King of England as absolute rulers of Ceredigion. Still more often they remained so by their own power without the leave of any one. There could have been no Norman

Conquest here at all resembling that of Glamorganshire, Brecon, or Pembroke. The reader who only wished for a general outline of events would be almost justified in eliminating the Cardiganshire Normans, from his memory, and regarding the province merely as a part of the Principality of South Wales, and tributary to its reigning house at Dynevor, till the general break-up. This is not scientific history, but it is a great deal nearer the mark than letting the notion that Ceredigion was conquered early by the Normans sink into the mind. The alternative is to trace the bloody story through till Edward the First's settlement. I am assuming, perhaps impertinently, that the gentle reader will not often do this. It is a thrilling and instructive story, but only a person of phenomenal memory and with a strong motive for doing so could possibly carry it about with him afterwards.

There were tremendous battles fought in Cardiganshire in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was a favourite cockpit for the forces of North and South Wales, while the Normans, even when ousted from both coast and inland castles, were always in force in their permanent strongholds south of the Teify with their Flemish supporters. At Llechryd, for instance, there was a most sanguinary engagement, between our old friend Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, fighting with his brothers against the reigning prince of South Wales, Rhys ap Tudor. The latter had been driven by these turbulent Princes of Powys to seek refuge in Ireland, but returning with a large force of Irish soldiers he was joined at Cardigan by his own Welsh supporters and choked the Teify, where Llechryd's ivy-mantled bridge now crosses it, with the corpses of his enemies including two of the sons of Bleddyn. But the most notorious, and bloody, or at any rate, the most sung-of battle of that time took place below the very walls of Cardigan town and castle, for the town was once walled. Giraldus, who lived soon after the event, amongst others, tells us all about it. It was an attack in 1135 of the combined forces of North and South

Wales on an Anglo-Norman army who, though defenders of Cardigan, seem to have gone outside it to meet their foes. The Welsh were completely victorious, the retreat of the English was cut off by the breaking of a bridge over the Teify, and three thousand is the most moderate estimate of those who fell. You might cross the river dryshod, say the chroniclers, so numerous were the corpses in its bed.

"The green sea brine of Teifi thickened. The blood of warriors and the waves of ocean swelled its tide,
The red-stained seamew screamed with joy as it floated upon a surge of gore."

Newport Bay.

CHAPTER X

THOSE who would have a glimpse of the wild and rugged coast of this southern corner of Cardiganshire will do well to run out to Gwbert only three miles beyond the town at the mouth of the Teify, where there is a good inn much resorted to for this purpose. But we for our part must cross the bridge on to the Pembroke side, and, as speedily as may be, set our faces to the south-west and to Newport on the Pembroke coast. From what I have said, it may have been inferred that Cardigan has no railroad outlet. This is not so, for a line winds through the Pembrokeshire hills to the Junction of Whitland on the Great Western route between Carmarthen and Milford, of which I know nothing except that it achieves the journey in something under two hours.

One must not however leave the village of St. Dogmaels, a little below Cardigan on the southern shore, without notice, if only for the ruins of its ancient monastery founded by the first Norman Conqueror of North Pembrokeshire. There was a sanguinary conflict here too in the year 1088, in which Rhys ap Tudor, the renowned South Welsh Prince, who had conquered at Llechryd, defeated one of his feudatories, Einion, Regulus

of Pembroke. This battle is interesting as having indirectly provoked the conquest and settlement of Glamorgan by Fitz Hamon and his Norman knights. For it was this defeated Pembroke Einion who fled to Glamorgan and stirred up its Welsh Prince Iestyn to that fatal application for Norman aid against his suzerain, Rhys ap Tudor, which proved his ruin.

Cardigan Bridge.

But St. Dogmaels has a further and perhaps more human interest, for in the Monastery, which was founded soon after the above-mentioned battle, Giraldus Cambrensis, just a century later, with his crusade-preaching archbishop, spent the night. And Gerald tells us how the next day a great crowd assembled on the southern shore of the river to hear the archbishop's

exhortation. With that delightful faculty of his for picking out little realistic incidents, he describes the manner in which the nearest relative of two of the volunteers for the Holy Land faced the situation. One was a mother, and when her son had been signed with the cross, she lifted up her voice as if inspired, and thanked the Divinity for the honour permitted to her in having given birth to a crusader. The other was also a lady, but a wife who took a very different view of the matter. For publicly seizing her adventurous spouse by the belt, she gave him so plainly to understand he would have to stay at home and look after his family, that not another word was said on the matter. But you could not flout archbishops and the Holy Church for nothing in the twelfth century, and Giraldus was the last man to omit recording the supernatural penalties that inevitably followed. For three nights after this, he tells us, a voice was heard by this impious woman upbraiding her for having robbed God and His Church of a faithful servant, and when she awoke, it was to find that she had overlaid her infant child and smothered it. There was no facing such a warning as this, and in the morning she not only urged her husband to depart at once, but herself sewed the cross upon his tunic. The next evening, Gerald tells us, his party were royally entertained by Prince Rhys in Cardigan Castle, the very place where the reverend author's famous grandmother, Nest, with her second husband must have spent much of her time.

Even if the ten miles of hilly road from Cardigan to Newport were more interesting than they are, I should have to occupy the space in saying something about Pembrokeshire generally, and preparing the way in some sort for the all too short period we can spend within its borders. For Pembroke as a county is a land unto itself, differing in many essentials from every other province of South Wales. Its scenic glories lie chiefly in its long and iron-bound coast. Its interior is pleasant enough to look upon, and here and there even beautiful, but as a whole not of a type to draw the

average tourist out of his way, as almost every other county in South Wales might fairly aspire to do. But Pembrokeshire excels them all, not only in its coast scenery, but in certain other matters of interest which will duly appear. Nor, as in most other Welsh counties, is there the good excuse for the stranger of inquiring mind to complain of any lack of local chronicles, for the county is exceeding rich in its descriptive literature, and has been freely dealt with by enlightened and entertaining historians, sons of the soil, both in ancient and modern times. As some sort of testimony to this, I may at once confess that though I entered Pembrokeshire for the first time during a recent summer in the interests of this little book, I felt on crossing the bridge at Cardigan, and touching the soil of the old Lordship of Kemes, that it was hardly strange ground. Now I do not think any amount of Theophilus Jones, or Sir Thomas Meyrick, invaluable tomes though they be, would prove inspiring to a traveller as yet unfamiliar with Cardigan or Brecon, or of much comfort to them when they got there, while as for Radnor and Carmarthenshire their story has yet, I believe, to be seriously written.

But this is not so with Pembrokeshire, and, speaking for myself, I felt the sort of eager curiosity with which one looks for the first time on scenes that from books and from oral sources one seems to have been long in touch with, though without definite hopes perhaps of ever making their actual acquaintance, perhaps ever to see them in the flesh.

The distinguishing peculiarity of Pembrokeshire lies of course in its racial composition. The northern half of the county, speaking almost literally, is as Welsh as Cardiganshire in blood and speech. The southern half in both particulars as English as Hampshire. A curving line runs from west to east across the centre of the county, dividing these communities so sharply that in some places they actually face each other across a village street, and scarcely anywhere is the neutral belt more than a mile or two in width. Across

this line there has been no social trafficking, no intermarriage, no sympathy of any kind to speak of. But a deep-rooted prejudice, coupled with a general inability to understand each other's tongues, has been going on for eight centuries, in spite of the fact that since mediæval times there has been no fighting or quarrelling, not even a difference in religion or creed, to help sustain a condition of things that has surely no parallel in Europe. For Pembrokeshire is not a remote district in Spain, or the Danubian provinces, but a very average specimen of Anglo-Saxon progress.

As we rise, the bleak fence-chequered uplands, with the Precelly mountain always blocking the south-east, or drop into the sheltered valleys by the side of laughing streamlets and white-washed homesteads in this North Pembroke country, let me beg the reader's patience for a little of that early story which has so greatly influenced its present curious state.

We need not go behind the Normans, except to say that all modern Pembroke till their advent, or Dyfed, to speak broadly, was a fief of the kingdom of South Wales at Dynevor, was inhabited by Welshmen, and governed more or less by Welsh Reguli. The precise amount of Norse and Irish blood on its coasts or interior need not worry us here. It was in brief a Welsh province like Ceredigion, though it included St. David's within its boundaries, the Metropolitan see of Wales, and all that such ecclesiastical distinction then implied. Nor must I do more than mention the actual or reputed pilgrimage, or something more, of William the Conqueror to that Holy Shrine. The vital moment for Pembrokeshire was when that early filibuster, Martin de Turribus, arrived in 1087, with a band of mail-clad followers, in Fishguard harbour. The moment too was opportune, for the natural leaders of the province were dead or absent. Martin was a mighty warrior, and had been given lands in Devon and Somerset by William, which apparently did not content him. He landed without opposition and made his headquarters at Nevern, where we

ourselves, I hope, shall very soon be. The native Welsh, though for the moment leaderless, collected on the hills, but could do little against the doughty Martin and his men-at-arms. To shorten a quite refreshingly bloodless story, Martin became absolute master of this northern lordship of Kemes, holding it as a typical Lord Marcher of the King of England. He made Nevern his headquarters and built a castle there, but he seems neither to have disturbed nor oppressed his Welsh subjects. His followers probably married Welsh wives, and from that day to this there has been nothing to interrupt the ordinary flow of Welsh life, language, and thought in northern Pembroke. The redoubtable Martin, among other things, seems to have been an ardent chess player, and while most of the Lord Marchers were teaching their semi-conquered Welsh subjects to hate them, and to fight them, the Lord of Kemes was initiating his into the mysteries of his own favourite game, and holding friendly bouts of chess with them at his castle at Nevern, washed down no doubt with lashings of mead and metheglin.

Southern Pembroke, or what is now the English portion, "Little England beyond Wales," was conquered about the same time, but in different fashion. Arnulph, Son of Roger Montgomery, a family illustrious in these marcher conquests, was in this case the aggressor and landed where Pembroke town now stands. This was a much longer and bloodier story. Gerald de Windsor, Nest's future husband, became his deputy, and William Rufus himself came down and joined in the fray. And by consequence, when the turmoil was all over, castles built and the Welsh driven out, it was not a Lordship Marcher like North Pembroke, but Crown property, and in due course an English Earldom. It was settled with English adventurers, with whom the Scandinavian, or quasi-Irish elements readily fused. In the reign of Henry I., again, a community of Flemings, flooded out in the low countries, sought refuge in England, and the King, either immediately or as an afterthought, sent them down to South Pembrokeshire, partly to get them

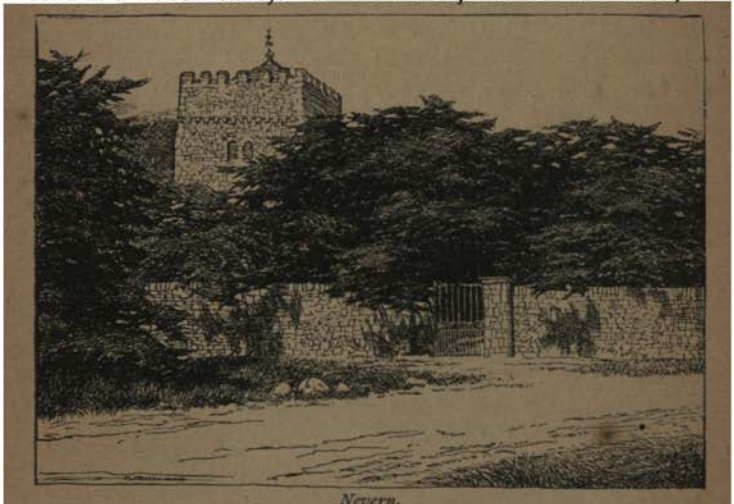
out of the way and partly to assist his English colony at this remote extremity of Wales in repelling the natives from their boundaries. A second batch of Flemings are said to have been despatched in the reign of Henry II., while immigrants from Devonshire and Bristol swelled the Teutonic and anti-Welsh community, which, protected by a chain of castles, and dependent on itself alone for defences, soon crystallised into a replica of an ordinary English community. As such it has ever since remained, and one might say that the interest attaching to it was of the kind that would belong to a large island of Englishmen fifty miles from the English shores. But it is more, for the fifty, nay, seventy miles of space that cuts it off from its body, politic and social, is not a dumb ocean, but a quick-witted and lively alien race.

Nor must one forget the Middle Province, to speak broadly, of Dewisland, the Episcopal district of St. David's, which was not infringed upon, and remained, like that of Kemes, absolutely Welsh, under the bishop, and together with the last and the little Lordship of Kilgerran formed the "Welshery" of Pembrokeshire.

It will now be understood how two distinct Pembrokes were formed, though we may well marvel that they should still remain as intact as they were till the 13th century, when they ceased, with occasional lapses, from cutting each other's throats. The general story of Pembrokeshire from these times onward is of abiding import in the history of Britain, but the imperative necessity of explaining why the southern half is filled with rustic Englishmen, who look on their neighbours across the road, or beyond the brook, much as a Shropshire yokel looks on a Merioneth mountaineer, has taken up already too much space. One must only in equity conclude by saying that the North Pembrokeshire Welshman, on his part, regards the Anglo-Fleming as possessed of all the undesirable characteristics of the Saxon, and several more besides. There is no enmity, that is the further marvel of the situation, only a quiet, deep-rooted, constitutional polite antipathy, to which a little crown-cracking would come,

one might think, as a friendly relief. It is said that the last few years have seen some modification in this cleavage, but if so, a dozen or even twenty years are really of no consequence in eight hundred. A decade or two ago it would have been every whit as remarkable as it is to-day, and about its rigidity then there is no manner of doubt.

As we draw near to Newport and the sea-coast, Nevern opens beautifully to the view, lying some hundreds of feet below our road in a narrow valley. It looks the place of distinction, as



Nevern.

well as the abode of rural peace and beauty, that it surely is, and is well worth the scramble down to it and back again, laborious though this may be. An ancient and capacious church, with massive battlemented tower of grey stone; a wide spreading graveyard on the hill slope; an avenue of yews, so old and thick, that not a glimmer of sunshine could ever pierce them; a ribbon of green meadows, with a buoyant trout-stream sparkling through it; and a fine wealth of ancient timber, clamorous with rooks, and above the tall tree tops the cone-shaped peak of Carn-

ingly, with its dark crest of crags rising in really majestic fashion into the sky. Such is Nevern, as I recall it. The church is a sixth century foundation, dedicated to St. Brynach ; the building we see, Norman for the most part, was reared by the immediate descendants to whom the redoubtable chess-playing Martin left this compact little kingdom of his. This was its capital before his son removed to Newport, and on yonder wooded ridge above the church tower stood the castle that Martin built. Before the porch of the church stands an immense stone, elaborately wrought, and carrying an undecipherable inscription, a relic not much younger probably than the original foundation of St. Brynach. Half the population of Kemes would appear to have been buried in this romantic spot, and who can wonder, for the prospect might well rob death of half its terrors. At the top of the churchyard are some family burial grounds, rows of horizontal slabs, beside gravel walks and flowers, with stone doors opening into walled vaults overhung with foliage and creepers. These, I think, appertain to the neighbouring estate of Llwyngwair; and a curious epitaph, relating to the children of an eighteenth century vicar of Nevern, here struck my fancy :

> " They tasted of life's little cup,
> Refused to drink the poison up,
> But turned their little heads aside,
> Disgusted with the taste, and died."

Two miles down the narrow valley, past the pleasant seat and woodlands of Llwyngwair, is the cove where the rivulet meets the sea, with the old borough of Newport lying on the slope above; an ancient place, doing its small business, I imagine, chiefly on great waters. A thousand or so people perhaps inhabit the one or two quaint streets and suburbs of this backwater of life. Its zenith seems to have been reached in the time of Elizabeth by means of its woollen trade, when a pestilence so decimated the town that it shrivelled sadly, and gave way permanently to its rival Fishguard. Perched high

above the sloping streets, in true feudal fashion, stand the ruins of the castle built by Martin's son, who also founded the town and married a Welsh princess. It has been partly restored for habitation, but what is left of the original portions suggest considerable magnificence when the ancient lords of Kemes lived here. There was here, too, quite a rare continuity of tenure. Llewelyn the Great seized the castle for a time, but otherwise the rulers of this little kingdom, who were entirely independent of the rest of Pembroke, seem to have held their own and governed their Welsh subjects through those stormy centuries with comparative felicity, helped no doubt by their admixture of native blood.

An abiding interest, however, will always attach both to the Castle of Newport and dominion of Kemes, from the fact of George Owen, of Henllys (now a farmhouse in the neighbourhood) having been lord of both. It is still vested in his descendants. Sir Martin Lloyd, the present owner, exercises the right of the Norman founders of Newport, and nominates its mayor; the only instance, I believe, of the kind in Britain. Perhaps if the mayoralty of Newport were a more arduous and critical post, this picturesque survival would be a matter of contention.

The church, an ancient one, with a square tower, stands high on the same ridge as the castle, and commands a delightful view up the valley of the Nevern river. Here too is a churchyard, thickly studded with tombstones in Welsh and English, old and new, telling, not only their tale of local history, but the sea-going proclivities of those who lie beneath them, in the word "Master Mariner" so constantly appended to the Thomas Thomas or the William Williams thereon recorded. One looks out of course in these chartered sea-coast towns for the Anglo-Welsh names, the old Colonial families among the others, and finds them. . . . Here is a Matthias, and the Matthiases came in with Martin de Tours. Here is a Havard, name of note in the same path of adventure in Pembroke

and Brecon, and of the same period. Here too are Laugharn's and Peregrines among the serried ranks of Griffiths', Roberts', Jones' and Pryces. But it struck me very forcibly that in no

Newport Castle.

long time this picturesque God's Acre would vanish wholly into the jungle that was surely claiming it. Long grass and ferns were fast wrapping the tombs in their kindly but hardly orthodox embrace, and ripening blackberries were hanging in

festoons from the headstones of peasant and tradesman, of Armiger and Master Mariner. I have never seen a churchyard, let alone the churchyard of a town, look quite so like a refuge for the partridge or the hare. There was at any rate no lack of decoration at hand for the harvest thanksgiving which seemed to be imminent at the moment I speak of.

Stretching upwards from town and church and dominating castle, is the long rough slope of Carn-engyl-lle, whose rugged volcanic summit, from a height of some fifteen hundred feet, looks down over land and sea. And, as we pursue the Fishguard road, this striking peak, known colloquially as Carningley, calls for more than one look backwards ere it merges in the craggy ridges of Llanllawer mountain, whose northerly and sunless slopes, for most of the journey, shut out the inner country and press us towards the sea. An ancient legend relates that St. Brynach, a saint, to whom many Welsh churches are dedicated, used to retire to the summit of Carningley and commune with celestial beings, which earned it the name of "Mons Angelorum." It is but seven miles between these two little sea-coast towns, and ancient rivals for the trade and custom of Welsh Pembrokeshire, a lonely road for the most part and traversing the rolling plateau that spreads from the foot of the Llanllawer mountain to the summit of the cliffs. There is a something new in the outlook and the atmosphere that we have not yet met in our pilgrimage through Wales. Though we touched the coast, and smelt the sea in Cardiganshire, it is now for the first time that we really catch the full significance of this wild south-western seaboard. The narrow fiord-like bay of Newport runs up nearly to our feet, and its sheltered tides, bridled yet further by protecting barriers of rock, surge quietly upon craggy ledges, that here only just show their teeth upon the fringe of sloping sheep pastures. But away out to sea and to the north, the coast-line rises high and savage. Bold uplands of green or russet, faintly chequered with a network of stone fences, and here and there splashed with the white

gleam of a farmhouse, hang like a mantle over the crown and edges of the gloomy cliffs. Even a quite moderate south-west wind is hurling the surf with much commotion against the iron feet and shoreless coves of that great block of slate-stone, which spreads away to the north of Newport bay.

Newport.

Before us the huge hump of Dinas, which divides the latter from the bay of Fishguard, looks like an island from our road, and is, in fact, not far from being one. Here, too, as everywhere, the front presented to the sea is precipitous, uncompromising, inhospitable; sheer walls of gloomy rock, hundreds of feet high, where ebbing tides leave neither sand

nor shingle at their base, but only a dark shiny belt to mark the limit of their rage; haunts terrible to sea-goers, and beloved only of sea birds, whose white wings flash in countless numbers against the sombre background, or swoop over the sad-looking farms that lie staring inland from the back of those high ridges which drop so fearsomely into space upon the further side.

And what of this strip of bench land over which our road is undulating now between mountain and sea? Here are farms too in plenty, and trees sorely smitten and scorched by the wind; sometimes a grove of stunted oaks, sometimes a lonely ash tree, wan and seared in its struggle for existence. Here are patches of waste bog and bracken, or heathy pastures, littered with rocks that have tumbled from the mountain ridges above, where they cling to the slopes in such abundance as to give this inner and older barrier of the ocean almost as stern a look as the lower one that now meets the waves. Along these mountain ridges too, the traces of forgotten peoples lie thick, traces of their wars, their worship, and their daily lives. The dwellings of our own day also lie sprinkled in Irish fashion over field and common, or crouch upon the rocky ledges of the mountain slope. Humble one-storied houses for the most part, but prinked out often in gay colours, scarlet or blue, or sometimes put into mourning and black edges, a common fancy, it seems, upon this coast. The thatched roof, however, is not so much in vogue down here as to the north of the Teify, and indeed, even the roped down thatch of South Wales might be sorely tested when placed so completely at the mercy of the tempest as it would be here.

It is a prodigious drop from the sea-coast ledge down to Fishguard harbour, and as violent a change of climate as of outlook. Here, in the narrow valley, down which the Gwayne pours its limpid streams through miles of hanging woodlands, flowers and shrubs of southern climes, myrtles, hydrangeas, and fuchsias luxuriate in the mellow air. A country-house, notable as having been a century ago the abode of Fenton, the well-

known historian of Pembrokeshire, with its charming grounds and plantations, embellishes still further the seaward outlet of a glen that for many miles inland is well worth exploring, and may readily be followed on a passable road.

The town of Fishguard crowns the summit of the steep hill beyond. Down here the scene is essentially Cornish—a mountain stream tumbling out of a gorge almost into the sea; a long narrow harbour of green water, walled in by precipitous

Fishguard.

rocks and overhung by lofty hills; a single long row of old-fashioned cottages with slate-stone roofs and white-washed walls lining the wharf, while a dozen small sailing craft and a score of boats ride at their moorings.

Such is Fishguard harbour where Napoleon's soldiers intended to land in 1797, but did not, as we shall see. A steep climb of many hundred feet brings one to Fishguard itself, an old-fashioned and somewhat tight-packed little town, with an

open space in its centre and various narrow and devious ways leading out of it. Fishguard, however, has witnessed what no other place in England or Wales has seen in modern times, namely, the surrender and parade of a French Corps as prisoners of war, and "The Black Bull Inn," which was the headquarters of the British force and witnessed the signing of this notable surrender, is still standing.

An outstanding and rocky headland divides Fishguard harbour from Goodwick bay, the last presenting a beautiful picture, as we drop down the long descent on to the only strip of sandy, sheltered beach that all this inhospitable coast can show. It is half-a-mile long, and is coming into some repute among bathers with the help of recent enterprise on the part of the Great Western Railway. It was on these very sands that General Tate and his fifteen hundred Frenchmen laid down their arms with such cheerful alacrity. It was on the hill to the left, as we descend from Fishguard, that the Welshwomen in their red shawls played that unintentional (or as some say cunningly-devised) practical joke on the French, and made them think that the British army was coming up in force.

Goodwick is really a beautiful bay. On the east side a rocky promontory, with an ancient fort upon its point, shoots out a mile into the sea. Upon the west there leaps out seaward the headland of Penainglass, a rugged lofty mass of wood and heather and shining light grey cliff, to whose steep slopes the pretty little watering-place clings.

Of all these modest bathing resorts on the south-west coast of Wales, Goodwick seems to me to be very easily the most attractive. Nor is it any drawback that you can get there by train with reasonable patience; the Great Western having quite recently extended thus far a branch line from Clynderwen, on their main route. Formerly Haverfordwest, sixteen miles off, was the nearest station. The same company are building stone wharves here on a considerable scale, with a view to bringing sea traffic into connection with their line, and rumour

says, a new route to Ireland. However that may be, neither rail nor engineering work materially affect the charm of Goodwick. These same improvements include also the only modern hotel of the first class on the whole coast south of Aberystwith. This has been placed, too, in the most romantic situation, at the far extremity of the village, on a ledge in the wooded cliff looking down upon the sea and across the bay, and is already the chosen resort of many Welsh people of taste and discrimination. I myself spent an all too short week at Goodwick in the autumn. Not at this haunt of fashion, however, for it was a modest and bowery hostelry in the village itself that gave me shelter, and everything else that I looked for, and a good deal that I did not. The original Goodwick, pronounced *Goodick*, by the way, was formerly an insignificant hamlet, which is natural, seeing that Fishguard is in sight crowning the high hill top across the bay, but a mile off. A few old-fashioned cottages of "genteel" description embowered in leaves and some fishermen's habitations, low-browed, with heavy moss-grown stone roofs, squatting on the terraced hill-side, represent old Goodwick. But newer Goodwick, with its not as yet very numerous residences and villas, runs pleasantly along the terraced way leading to the big hotel near the point. The outlook is not merely over the bay, and along the coast, past Dinas Head, and away to the stern capes of Kemes[1] at the mouth of the Teify, but extends inland over the marshland of Goodwick shore, through which a trout-stream wanders out of a woody valley backed by pleasant hills. Right over Fishguard is the dark mass of Llanllawer mountain, and away to the right, on the horizon, the humpy forms of the Precelly hills.

Now the Precelly group of hills is the one really extensive bit of wild mountainous upland in Pembrokeshire. It is the mother of most of its many streams and a great landmark from every part of the county. No one can go to Fishguard or Goodwick by train without making its acquaintance, for the

[1] The spelling of Kemes used here is that of the best Pembrokeshire authorities.

railroad clambers through and over it, and for many miles pursues a most solitary and exhilarating course by the banks of peaty streams and amid fine wastes of brown moorland. At the highest point touched, and almost in the heart of the wilderness, is the station of Rosebush, where there is a hotel of some pretension, commanding wonderful views over moorland and low country, and attracting, no doubt, the hill climber, the angler, and the health-seeker, and no doubt the jovial week ender. There is no summit here, to be sure, over eighteen hundred feet, but the hills of North Pembroke high and low have a habit of culminating in such fantastic and weird-looking crowns of rock, that one forgets their stature in a ferocity of appearance almost uncanny in a country so comparatively smooth and physically unremarkable. But Goodwick and its immediate neighbourhood for the moment must claim our whole attention, and above all that French invasion, which is still, after the lapse of a century, such a burning memory.

It is just twelve years since an old woman, one Nelly Phillips, died near Fishguard aged 103. She was nine years old at the time of the great event, was driving the cows home, when she remembered seeing the French frigates first appear off Fishguard bay, and may be mentioned as a somewhat remarkable "link with the past." I am afraid those fifteen hundred French soldiers who landed on the rocky point of Carregwasted were not very reputable ones, or very formidable warriors. They were under the command of a General Tate, an American, supposed to be a man of enterprise, and a fire-eater. Some of the officers were Irishmen. Some of the men were selected dare-devils, others were released convicts, whose character and situation would make them useful allies for their more respectable and disciplined comrades. Some cynics have affirmed that this expedition was planned by the French Government for the purpose of getting fifteen hundred incorrigible ruffians boarded and lodged at the expense of the British. This would have been a really excellent and profitable joke to have played on a country with which you were at war, and surely a quite

legitimate one. But it is to be feared this humorous conception of the affair is not accurate, and indeed it would not do to hint that it was so in South-West Wales, and rob the Pembrokeshire yeomen and the Cardiganshire militiamen of their glory, for the former still carry "Fishguard" on their standard, and are rightly proud of it.

Hoche, the enterprising French general who contrived the more formidable raid on Ireland, when Wolfe Tone was captured, was also responsible for the organisation of this one. The Fishguard expedition seems to have been intended to distract the British Government in view of more serious attempts elsewhere. But if it did nothing else it raised such a commotion in this picturesque and remote corner that the local pulse still quickens at any reference to the incident, and those who have heard the story at first hand from their fathers and mothers wax warm and eloquent at the very mention of it. Frenchmen, it may be presumed, were no better acquainted in 1797 with our domestic affairs than they are at present, and when General Tate, after some demonstrations in the Bristol Channel which frightened the Somersetshire rustics, arrived off the coast of Wales, it was with something like a conviction that the Welsh people were ripe for rebellion and would rally to his standard. Perhaps the Irish officers were responsible for this, thereby showing themselves as ignorant of Welsh concerns and sentiments as the less heroic politicians of their nation, who, a decade or so ago, turned up in Wales with almost equally erratic impressions.

It was on February 22nd, 1797, in fine weather, that three frigates and a lugger were observed sailing northwards off St. David's, and so close to shore that Mr. Williams of Trelethin, who first observed them, and was a retired sea-captain, knew them to be French. They carried, however, the English colours, and would have deceived any other local eyes but those of this agriculturally minded sea-dog. St. David's was aroused, and a considerable body of people led by the gallant mariner,

headed for Fishguard, some sixteen miles off, the French ships moving parallel with them, and as near as they dare to the inhospitable coast. The natives living on the cliff-lands near Goodwick were so persuaded that an English flag meant an English ship that the good Mr. Mortimer of Trehowell—the largest farmer on Strumble head—actually prepared a supper for the officers, which the French eventually ate. Fishguard, however, was warned. It had a fort—the venerable erection still standing—and guns. The character and intentions of the visitors were no longer doubtful when the British flag was lowered, and that of the French Republic hauled up in its place. Great was then the confusion and terror of these simple people, who had not been touched by war's alarms, since Cromwell's time, at any rate, and not very seriously then.

Now south of Goodwick bay the coast trends outwards, and for many miles confronts the waves with as savage a barrier of surf beaten cliffs and shoreless coves as the imagination could well picture. At one spot is a narrow cove over which you might almost fling a stone, and one side of it is not actually precipitous, but a rocky hill slopes sharply down into deep water. It is said to be the only place south of Goodwick bay, which, as we have seen, was protected by a fort, where a landing was possible. Indeed, to look up and down the coast from that by no means hospitable rock, one would be inclined to wonder if any more forbidding shore could have been selected in the whole kingdom for the disembarkation of an invading army. Here, however, General Tate, his six hundred regulars and nine hundred convicts, known officially as the "second legion of France," got themselves on shore with the loss only of their guns, on that very evening of February the 22nd. Fifty men, at an outside estimate, posted on cliffs and slopes above, could have made the attempt hopeless. But the fifty men were not there, for the natives of the high lying farms were flying inland as hard as they could travel, laden with

spoons and bedding and such household gods as carts, horses, and backs stiffened by terror could carry.

General Tate, who seems to have been rather a good fellow, sent his men out the following morning to prospect among the twenty or thirty homesteads that, cut off from the interior by a wild, craggy mountain ridge, lie between the latter and the coast. There were few people left, but plenty of food and cwrw, and the General took up his quarters at Trehowell, where there was a good supply of claret in addition. A certain amount of looting of a not very baleful character, though rich in humorous and almost bloodless incident, was perpetrated. But on the whole, seeing that more than half the French force were convicts released for this enterprise, one must agree in thinking with a well-known Pembrokeshire historian that the French convict of 1797 must have been an extremely respectable person. It must be admitted, however, that they were not strongly tempted, for there were neither big country houses nor important villages within their reach. The main body of the French force were strongly entrenched on a rocky hill immediately above Llanwnda church, and almost within sight of Fishguard across the bay, three miles away.

In the meantime the great news had spread inland like wildfire. Lord Cawdor was at Stackpole Court, near Tenby, thirty-five miles off, and was awoke in the night. By noon the next day, acting for the Lord-Lieutenant, he was at Fishguard with the Castle Martin yeomanry, some Glamorgan and Cardiganshire militia, already garrisoned in Pembrokeshire, and a few volunteers, numbering in all seven hundred and fifty effective men. An officer with some experience of war was present, one Captain Davies, and as they were in view of the invaders' outposts, he was entrusted with the task of so drawing up the small British force as to give it the most imposing appearance possible. This the gallant captain did with much success; but the hills around were now crowded with country

people, to whom the presence of the soldiers had given some confidence. Legend is very positive that Lord Cawdor and Captain Davies utilised the crowds of North Pembrokeshire women in their scarlet cloaks, or "*wittles*," and tall beaver hats in their dispositions, and even goes so far as to maintain that they marched a file of them round and round the hill to give the impression of an abundant supply of British infantry coming up to their support. An attack on the French post at Llanwnda seems to have been meditated on this Thursday morning, but happily abandoned, for to the amazement of the spectators of this scene, so unforgettable in the annals of Pembrokeshire, and apparently to that of the French themselves, the three frigates were seen to spread their sails and take wing. History has never cleared up this somewhat mysterious abandonment of General Tate and his motley corps, but it has informed us that two of the ships were captured before reaching port, and that one of them, very appropriately rechristened *The Fishguard*, did duty in the British Navy.

About ten o'clock that night, two French officers arrived at Fishguard with a flag of truce. A council of war was at once convened and Colonel Knox, commanding the Fishguard volunteers, seems to have been at this critical moment in chief authority. This gentleman, who had lately bought estates both in North and South Pembrokeshire, seems to have incurred much odium among his brother officers for his lack of intelligence and capacity during this long and fateful day. It led afterwards to much recrimination, a demand on the part of the injured Colonel for a court of inquiry, and finally a duel with Lord Cawdor. It is not very apparent to the casual student of this picturesque and bloodless campaign where the scope for individual deficiency came in. The Colonel had only recently bought property in the county, and may have been a Scotsman or an Irishman, at any rate a stranger and a legitimate target for the proverbial local brick. Perhaps the collapse of the intended attack on the French position at Llanwnda on the

Thursday may have been his fault. If so, eternal gratitude is due to the then owner of Llanstinawr and Slebech. But however that may be, the much-abused Colonel seems to have been really the saving of the situation. For when the French envoys were introduced to the council of officers at "The Royal Oak," they demanded as the price of peace that their force should be sent back to Brest at the expense of the British Government, and submitted the following note from Tate:

"Cardigan Bay,
"5th Ventose,
"5th year of the Republic.

"SIR,

"The circumstances under which the body of troops under my command were landed at this place render it unnecessary to attempt any military operations, as they would lead only to bloodshed and pillage. The officers of the whole corps have, therefore, intimated their desire of entering into a negotiation upon principles of humanity for a surrender. If you are influenced by similar considerations you may signify the same to the bearer, and in the meantime hostilities shall cease.

"Health and respect,
"TATE, *Chef de Brigade.*"

Upon this Knox, with more ready wit than strict attention to accuracy, replied that an unconditional surrender was the only offer he and his friends would listen to, and failing this the French would be attacked at daybreak by twenty thousand men, ten thousand of whom were already in Fishguard and the rest on the march there! The French officers were then returned blindfolded with the intimation that an answer would be sent shortly, but that they would get no further comfort from it. At daybreak next morning Major Ackland, one of the Devonian stock who had just bought an estate in Pembrokeshire, rode to Llanwnda with the following ultimatum to General Tate signed by Lord Cawdor:—

"SIR,

"The superiority of the force under my command, which is hourly increasing, must prevent my treating upon any other terms short of your

surrendering your whole force prisoners of war. I enter fully into your wish of preventing an unnecessary effusion of blood, which your speedy surrender can alone prevent, and which will entitle you to that consideration which it is ever the wish of British troops to show an enemy whose numbers are inferior. The major will deliver you this letter, and I shall expect your determination by ten o'clock.

"I am, &c.,
"CAWDOR."

By noon no answer had arrived. Lord Cawdor then sent his aide-de-camp with a flag of truce to Tate's headquarters, informing him that if his men did not "open pans, shed priming, and march peaceably" down to Goodwick Sands, they would be attacked at once by "an overwhelming force." This settled the matter, and the French were marched without arms or colours, but with drums beating, to the edge of the marsh, where the road from Fishguard to Goodwick divides it from the shore. And there they formally surrendered. They must have presented a somewhat queer spectacle, for their uniforms proved to be those of the British line dyed brown, but still bearing the regimental buttons, while for headgear they had old cavalry helmets!

It is all very well to look at the humorous side and the comic elements of the "Fishguard invasion," now it is an ancient story, but in those days of slow communications that forty-eight hours of suspense must have been a painfully thrilling period for the coast population of North Pembrokeshire. At any rate, it was a unique experience for dwellers on any actual British mainland in modern times, and on that account perhaps deserves some exceptional notice. But I have not yet done with it, for a really romantic episode marked the final exit of some, at least, of the invaders.

Now the prisoners were stationed some at Haverfordwest and some in and about Pembroke, and in a walled building near that town was a large batch of them who, like the others, created some interest in the neighbourhood, and were permitted to earn a little money by the carving of toys and trinkets. It appears

that some young women of Pembroke, were employed about the prison for a short period each day—and that two of the prisoners won both the hearts and the confidence of a like number of these lasses. A sedulous watch was of course maintained that no implement of any kind should get into the hands of the Frenchmen, but a shin bone of beef served the purpose of these skilful craftsmen, for with this they undermined by degrees the wall of their barrack, the two girls removing the excavated dirt each day in pails. When the opening was completed, a hundred of the prisoners, all in that particular building, crawled through it in the night and, guided by their two fair rescuers, who were to go with them, and who had marked the arrival of a cargo vessel suitable for the purpose, made their way to the harbour. Arrived there, they overpowered the crew of the sloop without difficulty, but she proved to be fast aground and no efforts could get her off. A small yacht of Lord Cawdor's, however, lay close by, but she was only large enough to carry a quarter of the fugitives with safety. What process of selection was adopted, I know not, but it was quickly completed, and twenty-five Frenchmen, including, of course, the two whose fascinations had been the saving of the rest, together with the young women whose hearts were at once so tender and so stout, put to sea. The fugitives supplied themselves with water and provisions from the sloop, and the whole thing was managed with such marvellous secrecy that nothing was discovered in Pembroke till the next morning, by which time the Frenchmen, who must have chuckled rather at getting even with their old enemy Lord Cawdor, were standing out to sea in that gallant Earl's private yacht. Large rewards were offered for the bodies, dead or alive—though why *dead* is not obvious —of the two maidens who had thus smirched the loyalty of Pembrokeshire. A few days afterwards fragments of his lordship's yacht were washed ashore, and the bodies of its recent passengers were confidently expected to follow in due course. But these last, as a matter of fact, were all safe in France.

They had seized an English trading vessel off the coast, compelled its crew to take them into Brest, and turned the yacht adrift. The romance ended quite as it should do. The two Frenchmen married their respective sweethearts immediately on landing, and the reader will be glad to hear that the happiness of one pair at least is a matter beyond doubt. For when peace was made they actually came over to Pembroke on a visit, and all parties, private and official, agreeing to let bygones be bygones they had doubtless a very good time among the lady's friends. Indeed they settled down among them till another war disturbed their domicile.

I wandered much when at Goodwick about that high bleak country of Pencaer, every farm on which was ransacked, though not injured, by the French during their occupation; old stone buildings most of them with thick walls and heavy slate roofs, and a thin girdle of ash or oak trees seared and smitten by the sea winds against which they serve as some scant protection. Trehowell was there, not altered a stone since General Tate consumed Mr. Mortimer's supper and drank his claret, while at Brestgarn the owner kindly showed me a grandfather's clock—with a bullet hole in the very centre of the case, The clock had stood there in '97, and the household tradition runs that the Frenchman put his bullet through it, not from mere wanton mischief, but because he was frightened by one of those unearthly noises that these old clocks are liable to emit, and thought a man or a devil was hiding in it.

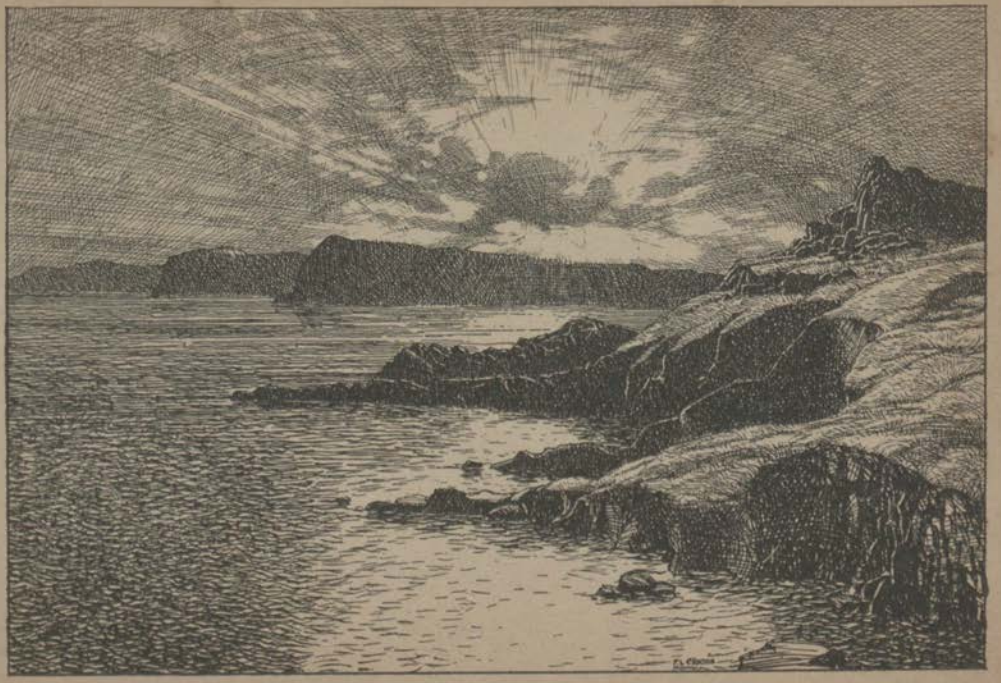
I have said that this Pencaer country—this block of windy farming land thrust out into the sea and girdled with such a grim coast—is shut off from the interior by a ridge of craggy hills. Indeed, this lofty barrier, rugged and notched on its crests, strewn on its slopes with volcanic rock and frowning down on this community of freeholders in their scattered stone homesteads, seems to suggest an ancient and homely proverb. Though it was the French on this occasion rather than they who had reason to regard themselves as between the devil and the deep

sea. As a matter of fact, much of the land in this large parish of Llanwnda is particularly good. It is the general aspect of it that is so fascinating and uncanny. One might more correctly say it lay between the Druids and the deep sea, for the rocky heights inland are thickly sprinkled with traces of those dim ages, and here, as elsewhere in south-west Wales, if one begins to mention them, these pages would become a mere catalogue of prehistoric remains, which is not its mission. To travel through a country which abounds in cromlechs, ogham stones, tomens, tumuli, carved crosses, Cytiau Gwaeddelod, maeni heirion, in mortuary or inscribed stones, and camps of all sorts, with scarcely any mention of them may seem remiss, but there really are only two ways of dealing with these treasures. You may locate them all, which is the business of a guide book, and this is not one. Or you may call in the expert and say a good deal about them, for it is no use saying a very little. This is obviously impossible, and, moreover, the antiquary is always available in his own pages to those who seriously seek after such things as well as invaluable to a complete enjoyment of rural or indeed any travel.

Llanwnda Church stands far back from the cliffs at the foot of the craggy hill where the invaders entrenched themselves. It is a small though venerable building, bleak and unsheltered. Giraldus Cambrensis was once its incumbent. Its communion plate was stolen by the French, but afterwards recovered. In a corner of the rude churchyard stands a curious street of private burial grounds in plots of about twenty feet square, surrounded by high stone walls and each entered by an iron gate. This one belongs to Penrhyn, that to Trehowell, a third to Garn. Ferns and mosses flourish in the walls, while a spindling ash-tree or two shivers in the sea wind above. But in the shelter of these roofless chambers, myrtles, fuchsias, and arbor vitæ mingle luxuriantly among the gravestones, which lie on the ground or stand upright in rows against the wall. I fancy this picturesque exclusiveness is peculiar. For these are

not people of distinction, nor are these vaults of the usual type. In one of the little mortuary gardens there are some coats of arms, it is true, but the prevailing note is the substantial yeoman, tenant or freeholder, and the English inscriptions in this Welsh country indicate that he held his head high. His belongings, too, would appear to have been freely gathered here from the distant places to which their line of life has called them, and sometimes again, the lawyers, doctors, and tradesmen who have married into the family would seem to have been accorded the privilege, no mean one, of sleeping their long sleep up here, among myrtles and fuchsias, in the face of the Western Ocean.

It is a mile hence to Carreg Wasted, and you must find your way down there as best you may, for there is no path through the fields where the oats and barley will be still standing after the stubbles in the Teify valley have been stripped bare of stooks. A deep and lonely dingle runs down to the sea. It is quite choked with a maze of foliage, and the breeze puffing up from the cove below plays over a dense roof of leaves, ash and oak, sycamore and birch, from whose matted depths even the timid magpie cannot steal away without commotion, while the affrighted wood-pigeons break out with thunderous roar. Out on the high, rocky promontory, thinly clad with grass and heather, where a stone pillar inscribed in Welsh and English marks the spot of the French landing, the scene is impressive and solitary. The water which rolls into the cove below is of that translucent green, which seems the peculiar property of western latitudes and savage coasts, and the cliffs that hang so gloomily over the further side, but a stone's throw distant, break about their tops into the most brilliant colouring as the lichens and heather, the gorse, bilberry plants, and brackens seize on the first possible chance of gaining a foothold. Over the deep green of the sea, athwart the dark wall of cliff, and far up against the glowing drapery of the hills, which drop their curtains all ablaze with autumnal splendour to the brow of the crags, the white sea-gulls swoop and soar. To the east the



Carreg Wasted.

headland of Penainglas marks the Gate of Fishguard bay. Away beyond the great hump of Dinas rising five hundred feet out of the sea guards its further entrance, while on the far horizon the bold head of Kemes at the Teify's mouth shuts out the coast of Cardigan.

Now as we have to get to St. David's, and are already down here in this Pencaer country, there is no occasion to return to Goodwick. Indeed to those whose time will not admit of more leisurely contemplation of the neighbourhood, I would suggest that they should reject altogether the first six miles of the inland and orthodox road to St. David's and make their way round to it by Granston to Mathry, where it begins to get interesting. We have already committed ourselves to that route, and the byways that lead through it need have no terrors for the cyclist, other than those inevitable hills which the tourist in Wales will long ago have made up his mind to. By this circuitous route the distance from Goodwick to St. David's would be about eighteen miles. The traveller on it will not only have a glimpse of this strange Llanwnda parish, with its physical and historic interests, but can leave his cycle at one of the farmhouses raided by the French, and walk down not only to Carreg Wasted but further on to Strumble Head itself. This too is a grand and lonely outpost, where sheep pastures terminate in black cliffs and upstanding promontories have been slowly transformed into islands by the fierce rush of the waves. The solitude is invaded once a year during the naval manœuvres when a small batch of coastguardsmen occupy the temporary station erected by Government, and by means of a telegraph wire stretched to Fishguard, report such doings of the rival fleets as may come within the range of their glasses. From there the main outlook is southward and gives a fine view of the coast the whole way to St. David's Head.

Returning to the road and pursuing it onward through this remote but not ill-cultivated ledge between the grim mountains and the grimmer cliffs, you escape from it at the village

Strumble Head.

of St. Nicholas and join the main road to St. David's close to Mathry. This is an ancient place of no particular interest, but with its church in the centre of thick clustering houses it crowns the summit of a rounded hill in a fashion curiously suggestive of the primitive times of this once blood-stained

Abermaur near Mathry.

coast land. The whole route from St. David's is what the guide books call "bleak and dreary," and they ought to know the public taste. My own notion of dreariness is not quite this; it would find its ideal in a run say from London to Peterborough or Ipswich in winter time, with an endless procession of shivery leafless conventionality, of mist exuding fallows, hedge-

row trees and rectangular fields, and carefully planted leafless woods and a contracted outlook. What redeems the bleakness of this Pembrokeshire high road does not depend on leaves or grass. Since the days of old George Owen, of Henllys, and long before, the land of Dyfyd was sadly shorn of woods. But though on only one occasion, namely, from near the Croesgoch Inn, you get a fine view of the coast—for that towards Strumble Head is in truth a very fine one—the sea is but a mile or two from you. Though you can only here and there catch a glimpse of it, the knowledge that it is booming in caverns and leaping up fine cliffs only just out of hearing should save any road from being described as if it were a turnpike between Bletchley and Weedon. But as a matter of fact this seven miles of gusty and treeless road commands, to begin with, as much sky as any other in the country, and when the sky is kind and the sea is near, and the period is summer, there is much satisfaction to be had from this alone. And, still better, it commands immense sweeps of territory stretching inland of a most unconventional kind—a characteristic, by the way, which the ulterior of South or English Pembrokeshire cannot so fully claim.

As you look over North Pembrokeshire from the St. David's road, it is a sunny, breezy stretch of varied colouring, part wild, part tamed, that fills the eye. The white-washed homesteads glint and flash as the sun, breaking out of a passing cloud, strikes them, at great distances, and brown bits of bog, strips of purple heather, or golden gorse break the far-stretching pasture-lands. Patches of mustard blaze brightly here and there on the foreground, and great flocks of sea-gulls make a distant meadow look betimes as if it had been newly dressed with lime. Hedges do not luxuriate in this windy country. Pembrokeshire banks are characteristic and as formidable to the sportsman as those of Meath or Kilkenny, but in this part, at any rate, the fern and foxglove, gorse and heather are a more ready covering to them than hazel, beech, or blackthorn. But what distinguishes

this Pembroke landscape, as already noted, are those weird natural fortresses of stone, that spring not only from the hill-tops but from among the low-lying pastures and the stubbles as if they had been built up there to play the part they doubtless did in prehistoric struggles. The very farm-houses suggest at times an almost prehistoric origin in the rugged quaintness of their architecture, their massive low walls, their heavy roofs of slate stone or drooping thatch, and now and again in the round chimneys that distinguish parts of Pembrokeshire and delight the antiquary. Away at the back of all, the bold sweep of the Precelly hills lies against the northern skyline and catches the shadows and the sunlight on its cloven sides. There is hardly, indeed, a spot in the whole country from which this mountain group does not form either near or afar off a pronounced feature in the landscape, or scarce a river which does not have its birth there.

Reading that quaint and delightful account of his native county by George Owen, of Henllys,[1] is apt to make one drop into undue quotations, not only for the sake of the matter but for the manner in which it is provided, and this, with the space at my disposal will not do. I have already spoken of this famous person as the possessor of such honours as the Elizabethan period found the ancient lordship of Kemes still possessed of. But George Owen's exact possessions do not in the least matter compared with what he tells us and the way in which he tells it. Would, indeed, that there had been more George Owens in Wales, and in other places too. He does not confine himself to the personal gossip of noble families, but gives us a picture of pasture and corn lands, farms and markets, of land tenure and labour as it was in his day. He dilates on the sporting habits of his neighbours, on the flavour of the trout and the pleasure of angling for them; the seasons when the salmon and sewin ran, and how they were caught in the different rivers; on the amount and distribution of game; the

[1] Edited by Dr. Henry Owen of Poyston.

comparative scarcity of deer and the extraordinary abundance of "seeley hares," exceeding that of any country that he knew of. He tells us of the gentlemen who had rabbit warrens, and those who had imported pheasants from Ireland in his day and naturalised the bird in Pembrokeshire. The woodcock he claims as the especial game bird of the county, though of course a bird of passage. He complains of the scarcity of woodland and of fruit trees, the latter a matter of mere neglect. He blames the gentry for not paying more attention to horse breeding, the common people for having ceased the weaving of their own clothes, though the cost of wool is double what it had been.

Of the country population, of the Englishry particularly, he tells us that few are "personable" enough for soldiers, and that "lieutenants and commissioners' of musters are more toyled in seeking thirty or forty personable men, than the neighbore shires are to find one hundred." This our author puts down to the young men spending all their childhood in herding stock. Not only was there a lack of fencing, but instead of combining, as in most other regions, for the employment of one or two "herds" for a whole village, each family sent their own children; and he reckoned that there were three thousand young Pembrokians idling in wind, rain, and sunshine, till they were "more like tawney Moors than people of this land," uneducated and useless for reasonable occupations. And this same lack of enclosures caused the universal branding of sheep, a great deal of dishonesty, and of filching from the poor by the rich, from the weak by the strong than was at all good, he declares, for the morals of the county. But it is in recounting the amusements of these Elizabethan Welshmen and Anglo-Welshmen that the Lord of Henllys would perhaps be most popular. Having remarked that the country is unusually free from "dicing" and games of chance, he speaks of the decay of archery and the popularity of tennis and bowls. It may be worth noting, in these days when games and the use of arms are being discussed with some heat as alternatives, that tennis

and bowls were forbidden under statute of Henry VIII. as useless for the defence of the country.

But it is on the ancient south Welsh game of Knappan he expands himself at greatest length and with the greatest effect. Those who like to hunt up a radical cause for everything might find perhaps in the pages of George Owen the clue to the problem of why the pick of a handful of south Welshmen, not for the most part educated at public schools, have for years routed the pick of all England at Rugby football.

Knappan was even in our author's time a very ancient game. It was regarded as the best training for war, and was chiefly played, or at any rate survived longest, in Welsh Pembrokeshire and South Cardigan. The game takes its name from the ball used, which was of some hard wood, and well greased for each occasion, and just small enough to be grasped in one hand. I have spoken of the parish football matches in Cardiganshire, and Knappan might well have been the origin of these, though it was a much more serious business. The fact that the Knappan was thrown instead of kicked is a mere detail when the distance between the goals was several miles, running with the ball the chief method, and the number of players reaching on occasions the formidable number of two thousand. But the humours of Knappan and its terrors far surpassed anything within living memory in the way of Rugby football, and many of us can remember when even this was a very different business from what it now is.

There were two classes of these fearsome contests in south-west Wales—"Standing Knappans," that is to say, regular annual matches on Church holidays between particular districts, and again impromptu games promoted by private gentlemen. Nevern and Pembroke, for instance, met every Shrove Tuesday, but the great contest must have been Kemes or virtually North Pembrokeshire against Cardiganshire, which was a regular fixture for Corpus Christi Day. "At these two playes have often been esteemed two thousand footmen besides horsemen,"

the latter an addition which will cause the modern athlete to open his eyes. But even in the private games the numbers appear to have been quite as formidable, for when two gentlemen had made a match, and appointed it "for such holeday or Sunday as pleased them," they proceeded to whip up whole parishes and hundreds upon the principle of "the more the merrier." "They would intreat all their friends and kinsmen in every parishe to come and bring his parishe wholelye with him." In addition to the multitude of players on these occasions came "great store of victuallers with meate, drinks, and wyne of all sorts, also marchauntes, mercers, and pedlars would provide stalls and booths."

The fun began at "one or two of the clocke." And while the two thousand or so players are stripping themselves of everything but "a light pair of breeches," and laying their clothes, shoes, and hats in heaps under the charge of specially appointed persons, the author himself, a frequent spectator and former player, as witness the old scars on his body, reads a little homily on the thoroughly sporting spirit which animates the crowd. "They contend not for anye wager or valuable thinge, but only for glorie and renowne, first for the fame of their country in general, next every particular (individual) to wynne praise for his activitie and prowes, which two considerations ardently inflameth the myndes of ye youthful people to stryve to the death for glory and fame, which they esteeme dearer unto them than worldly wealth." No actual goal seems to have been requisite in these colossal contests. The ball was thrown off at some central spot, and whichever side carried it furthest into their opponents' country and kept it there till nightfall had the honours.

Running with the ball and hurling it when tackled was the simple principle of this rough and hearty sport. There was "passing" too, for we are told of "scouts who stood outside the mayne playe" ready to receive the Knappan from their friends and hurl or carry it forward. The author somewhat

deplores the extreme roughness which had begun to characterise the game within his memory. "You shall see gamesters return home with broken heades, black faces, bruised bodies, and lame legges, yet laughing and merrilie jesting at their harmes, telling their adversaries how he brake his head, to another that he strake him in the face and how he repaid the same to him again, and all this without grudge." Now, he says, "at this play private grudges are revenged soe that for every small occasion they fall by the ears, which being once kindled all persons on both sides become parties, so that you shall see five or six hundred naked men beating in a cluster together as fast as the fiste can goe—brother against brother, man against master, friend against friend. Nowadays too," laments Owen, "they will not scruple to pick up stones and use them in their fist." Then a still greater terror is added to the pandemonium of this "truly warlike exercise," for the horsemen with their cudgels ride pell mell into the struggling infantry, trampling on their naked feet and dealing blows "that would fell an ox or a horse," right and left, and particularly if they see a man to whom they owe a grudge, regardless of whether he have the Knappan or not. Let us hope these were only temporary ebullitions in a game that, rigidly played, was a fairly bloody one. At such times some would try to stop the fight, by holding up their hands and crying "hethwch—hethwch"—"peace—peace." "Sometimes," we are glad to learn, "this parteth them, and they return to their play." Though booths, stalls and vendors of goods were tolerated at the greater meetings, it seems that an able-bodied spectator had to keep well out of the way, for if he drifted by accident within the fringe of this Armageddon he was accounted thenceforth a player and "given a bastinado or two" to remind him that he had become a combatant.

The horsemen must have been a trying element to those who were not mounted. They naturally consisted of the more prosperous members of society, and were allowed to carry a stick. The size of this had formerly been limited by a regula-

tion ring which it had to pass through, but in George Owen's time it had grown to the size of a bludgeon. The horseman, when he caught the possessor of the Knappan, was supposed to demand its delivery thrice, after which he could hammer his opponent with his staff. But the ceremony of challenging, which must have been somewhat tedious in so fast a game, seems to have lapsed and the club laid on right heartily without more ado. It did not, however, follow in a rough country that the horseman always had the advantage in pace. The old-fashioned Rugby scrimmage too was more than anticipated when a weaker side at Knappan saw itself over-matched. For then a player, when he got the ball, would clasp it against his middle, one of his own side facing him and clutching him in turn round the waist, so that the Knappan was pressed between them. And the rest of the side rallying round and "laying grypes on round and about them both, and knit together like Bees in a swarm," formed a phalanx that the other side would take "a quarter of an hour" to dissolve. A series of these somewhat monotonous manœuvres often enabled the weaker side "to were out the daye and gev over playe without disgrace to themselves or their country."

George Owen concludes his description with "a merrye jest or two touching the same sport."

There was one young blade, he says, not skilled apparently in the game, but very proud of his horse, and being anxious to show off before the company, contrived to have the ball thrown him, upon which he stuffed it into the pocket of his hose and made off as fast as he could. He outdistanced all his pursuers but one old grey-headed country swain, hoarse in voice and rude in manners, mounted upon a little lean nag. The well-mounted dandy scorned the three demands for the Knappan which this sorry individual made of him, till the last began to rain blows with his cudgel on shoulders and head with such rapidity and violence as to make the golden youth cry for mercy, while he with difficulty extracted the slippery ball from

his breeches pocket, and smarting with pain delivered it to the old countryman "with Christ's curse and his own upon him." We are told of another gallant who, not being able to get hold of the Knappan, thought he would have some fun, at any rate at the expense of some of the field, and started off at a gallop as if he had the ball in his possession. A detachment of horsemen, readily taken in, followed him in hot pursuit and in time he was overtaken, but alas! the heady youth had not counted on the result, for when they followed their demands with a shower of blows it was no use his protesting that he had not the Knappan in his hose. His assailants either did not or chose not to believe him, till he was finally thrown from his horse and his clothes torn off him.

The last of George Owen's "merrye jests" related to the year 1588, when the Spaniards were off the coast with their "not truely termed invincible Navy." A great match of Knappan was going on in view of the sea, and a mariner sailing by asked how peace would be restored and was surprised when he heard it was all a pastime. "If this be playe," he said, "I could wish the Spaniards were here to see our plaies in England, certes they would be in bodily fear of our warre!"

Finally hear the Lord of Cemaes in proof of the accuracy of his description. "I have been oftentymes an agent and paciente at this unruly exercise and have often felt the smart, that I have written, the signes and seales of which I carrye in my heade, handes, and other partes of my bodye."

Ruins of Bishop's Palace, St. David's.

CHAPTER XI

"MENEVIA shall put on the pall of Caerleon and the preacher of Ireland shall wax dumb by an infant coming to the birth."

Thus Merlin foretold the birth and greatness of St. David, and the translation of the metropolitan see of the West from Caerleon, and with almost painful accuracy of detail. For it is not my business here to question high traditions, much less to spare needed space for the ruthless but somewhat confused attacks upon them by learned persons. We may fairly believe then, or at any rate set down here, that St. Patrick had founded a monastery on this lonely shore in Mynyw or Menevia, and that when a nun of high birth, about to become the mother of the future St. David, appeared before him he lost the use of his speech; not, however, it would seem from any shock at an approaching scandal, for recovering in due course he proceeded to prophesy great things of the unborn infant, whose father was Prince of Ceredigion.

How Menevia put on the pall of Caerleon, we have seen in a former chapter when St. David, whom tradition credits with being uncle to King Arthur, so astonished the Great Synod at Llan Dewi Brefi, that he was elected to the Bishopric of the South Wales diocese on the spot, consenting only upon condition that the seat of office was moved from Caerleon to

St. David's, where he had for long been Abbot of St. Patrick's monastery.

I almost tremble, as I look on the above simple and primitive narrative as here set down, and call to mind the stout and learned tomes perused either from inclination or other motives, at various times in the past few years. As we are far removed in this lightsome journey from the range of antiquarian shot and shell, I will make bold to suggest that many people who had wrestled, even moderately as I have, with the more accessible literature treating of this misty period of the Welsh Church would come back with a despairing groan to the old elementary legends with their doubtless substrata of truth. At any rate, when brevity is imperative what else can one do? It is really rather appalling to be confronted with St. David's, if it means anything at all to one, and but a fraction of a chapter to treat of it. The same might be said indeed of the county of Pembroke generally as here dealt with, and the consolation I have in this last matter is the conviction that a few weeks' acquaintance, even with the kind assistance of the most informing of local friends, does not qualify one for treating of this storied peninsula in less superficial and lengthier fashion. But even thus perhaps I am treating the scope and aims of this little book too seriously. Six months of Pembrokeshire would produce a congestion that could probably only be relieved at the expense of those many readers whose main object of travel after all, whether personally or by the fireside, is mountain and stream, sunshine and scenery, and are soon surfeited with the old castles and old tales, and want to hear nothing at all of prehistoric stories, though in this last I do hold myself free of serious reproach.

Now an unskilled mortal who had seen most of the Cathedrals in Great Britain might well confuse them in his memory. No one, however, who has once seen St. David's could ever forget it or confuse it with another. St. Asaph is a sufficiently diminutive cathedral town, and is finely situated, but it is the

St. Mary's College, St. David's.

centre of an ornate residential district, and so far as it goes looks it. The shrivelled townlet of St. David's, on the other hand, suggests the ends of the earth and an occasional cattle fair. Before you have done wondering where you might peradventure raise a crust of bread and cheese and a glass of beer, you are through the town and out at the other side with the grey mass of the Cathedral bursting suddenly into view, but a stone's throw off, and the open country breaking everywhere into craggy ridges against the sky line behind it. The situation of St. David's is not conspicuous or magnificent like Durham, Ely, or Lincoln, it is simply unique—both in the kind of country it lies in and in its actual site. The adjacent village bears not the faintest trace of its distinguished associations and long history. The surrounding country is mostly given over to small farmers struggling with a somewhat ungenerous and unsheltered soil. The strip of sea-board flings itself into fantastic pinnacles of crags, round whose rocky feet sheep and cattle have grazed for centuries on fenceless commons. On both sides of this remotest cape of Cambria, this Ultima Thule of South Wales, the waves roar among rocks and islands within actual hearing of the worshippers at this loneliest of British Fanes. In a shallow glen below the village the ancient Cathedral of St. Dewi rears its massive tower above the level of the market cross, with strange effect when first espied. An ancient arched gateway leads from the street into the long downward slope which forms the verdant and spacious graveyard. Under the walls of the Cathedral a little trout stream spanned by a bridge steals seaward. Between stream and Cathedral there is just room for the lofty ruins of St. Mary's College, founded by John of Gaunt, while on the slope of the hill beyond stands the still stately skeleton of the gorgeous palace built by Gower Bishop of St. David's and Chancellor of England in the first half of the fourteenth century. The artist's pencil will be much more effective than my pen in bringing the general sense as well as the detail of a *coup d'œil* unique in Britain before

the reader's eye: the still breathing and virile old Cathedral, of grey rose-tinted stone, the lifeless ruins behind it, the stern crags beyond.

The present building which was erected on the site of an older one in the year 1180, is in various styles of early English architecture which experts would describe as transitional, Romanesque to Gothic. The west front, however, was rebuilt at the close of the eighteenth century; but the really important repairs and restoration were done by Gilbert Scott in the 'sixties at the cost mainly of Anglo-Pembrokeshire donors. I must not attempt to accompany the reader round with the extremely efficient verger who piloted me, the only stranger to all seeming in St. David's on that occasion. He will find both without and within much to admire with the eye, and as much to interest in a reflective fashion as he may be equipped for; the fine arches of the nave, the magnificently carved roof or ceiling of Irish oak, the decorated stone screen of the fourteenth century; the throne presented by Bishop Morgan and the beautiful chapel erected by Bishop Vaughan in Henry VIII.'s time. The view up the nave for richness of decoration and splendour of detail is not easily matched by any church in Great Britain. There are many finely carved tombs and some that are sadly defaced, but will surely, for other reasons, give pause to the steps of the modern pilgrim. Among the latter a battered effigy is piously regarded as that of Gerald de Barri—our oft-quoted friend, Giraldus, who was buried in the Cathedral he strove so hard to be Bishop of, and for whose ancient dignities he so bravely battled. Among the former is the shrine of St. David himself, and the altar tomb of Edmund, Earl of Richmond, the father of Henry VII. Here, too, with visor raised, his head upon a helmet, his feet upon a lion lies Rhys ap Griffith, the last true prince of South Wales.

The story of St. David's, however, needs no Tudor, nor de Barri, nor Rhys monuments as reminders. It was the ancient church of West Britain and its Episcopal metropolis before

the stone of any English Cathedral was laid or thought of. Of the building that preceded this one we of course know nothing, save that it was gutted more than once by the Danes, and was pulled down in the 12th century to make room for the present structure. Much has been done of late years, but the appearance of rude treatment in former ones, and long ages of neglect, still stamp the grand old pile with a certain pathos that is in fine sympathy with its lonely and romantic site. One remembers, too, the long struggle of St. David's to retain its independence, and its stubborn resistance to the supremacy of Rome and Canterbury; its claim to maintain its old functions as metropolitan of that Welsh Church whose customs, that of a married priesthood in particular, so long held their own against the insistent Norman clerics backed by the Norman sword. Kings, princes, warriors, and divines, famous and innumerable, have worshipped before this high altar. William the Conqueror and Harold were here, while Henry II. was the last king to enter the older church, and this he did after landing at St. David's on his return from his first conquest in Ireland. Giraldus, who was of the period and the locality, tells us of an incident that for this reason alone is worth relating. How that the king came on that same day, habited as a pilgrim and leaning on a staff, to the Cathedral, being met by a procession of canons outside the door. As the procession moved solemnly along, a Welshwoman threw herself at the king's feet, with loud complaints against the Bishop. And while these were being interpreted to Henry, the woman, resenting the inevitable delay, waxed insolent, and called out in a loud voice, "Revenge us this day, Lechlavar! revenge us and the nation on this man." Now Lechlavar was a marble slab, where the little bridge now is, leading over the brook into the Cathedral yard, and beautifully polished by the feet of countless worshippers. An ancient legend ran that once upon a time when a corpse was being carried over it, the stone broke forth into speech, cracking itself in the effort, and thus earned its

sobriquet of "Lechlavar," the talking stone. On being driven off the woman grew still more violent, shouting out to the crowd the then familiar prophecy of Merlin, "A king of England and Conqueror of Ireland shall be wounded in this country by a man with a red hand, and die upon Lechlavar on his return through Menevia."

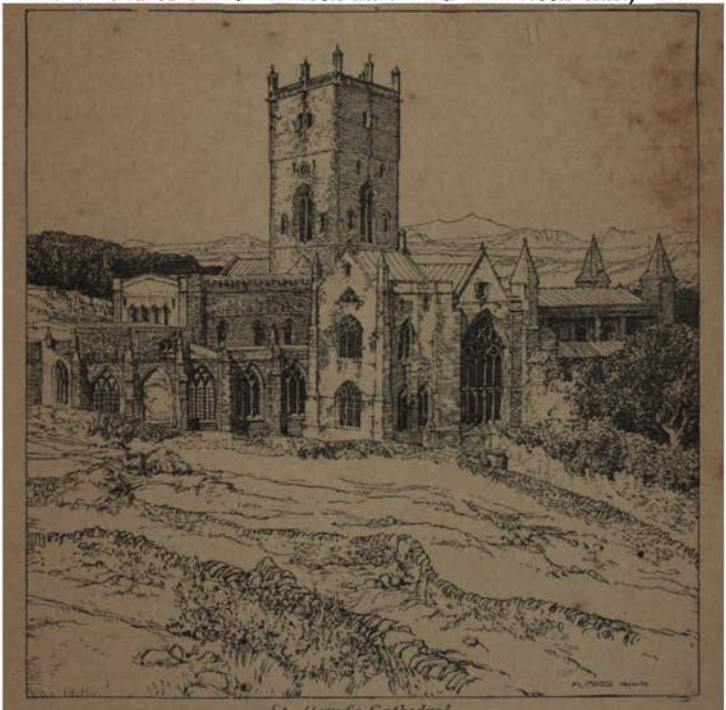
The king on hearing this approached the stone, stopped for a short time, looking earnestly at it, and passed boldly over. He then turned round, and pointing to the stone, cried out, "Who will hereafter give credit to the lying Merlin?" A bystander, jealous for the honour of the great Welsh seer, then called out indignantly, "*Thou* art not the king by whom Ireland is to be conquered, or of whom Merlin prophesied."

Till the time of Elizabeth the Bishops seem to have been frequent embellishers: to wit the splendid palace of Gower, the College of St. Mary by Bishop Horton, aided by John of Gaunt, the beautiful Chapel of Vaughan. Thenceforward, they were often dilapidators. Barlow tore the lead roof off his noble palace to provide dowries for his five daughters, who married five bishops, and virtually destroyed the building. Ferrars, the martyr of Carmarthen, probably on principle, let things go down, and Cromwell's soldiers sold the lead roof of the aisles east of the transepts. Laud was of course here, and Bull, Horsley, and many men of note. And one need hardly tell what great men were these Bishops of St David's in the olden time. They had four or five embattled palaces, and were sovereigns in Dewisland, with courts of justice at various places. They held the power of temporal as well as spiritual life and death in this stormy corner of the world, to which two pilgrimages were considered as the equivalent of one to Rome.

Nor were the rights of sanctuary confined to the Cathedral precincts. All over the parish of St. David's were crosses and holy wells which held the privilege. There were numerous chapels, too, along the sea shore, where passing navigators left quite large sums as votive offerings; while as for those muter

relics of pre-Christian times, there is no part of Wales on which they lie more thickly strewn than on this barren triangle of storm-beaten, island-studded shore.

The nearest station to St. David's is Haverfordwest, at the further end of those "sixteen miles and seventeen hills," with



St. David's Cathedral.

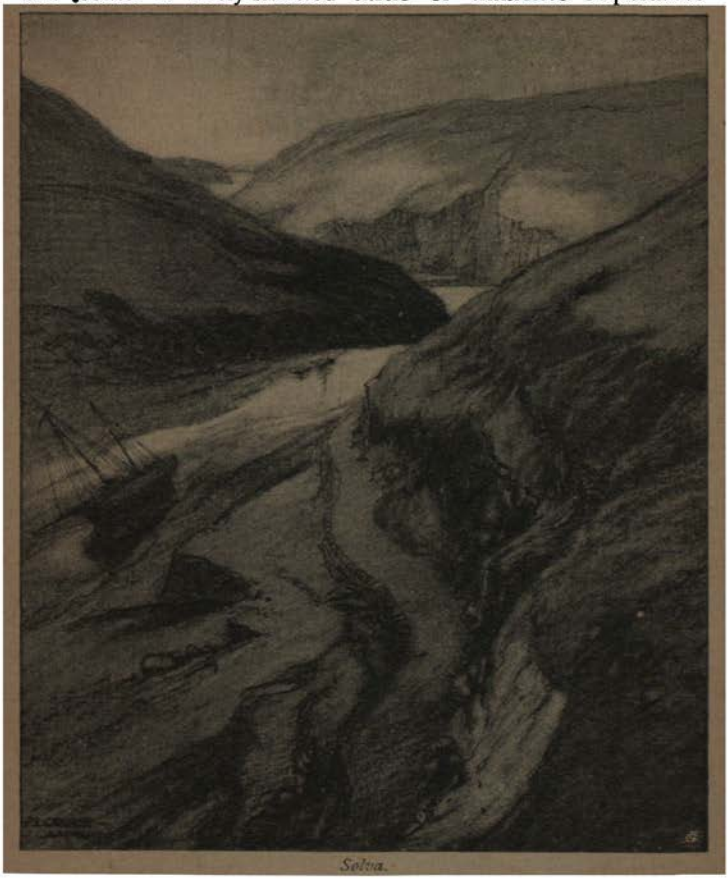
which you will not unnaturally find people here and there all over the world acquainted. For it would be strange indeed if a certain number of persons of learning or ordinary culture, in every generation, did not feel it incumbent upon them to see a spot so famous and so unique at least once in their lives. We ourselves not being pilgrims merely to the shrine of St. David

like these, but wanderers in many counties, have approached it from Cardigan and Fishguard, and must, therefore, though not without reluctance, leap the sixteen miles and the seventeen hills and land in the ancient and interesting town of Haverfordwest. In doing so we have also leaped the rubicon which divides Welsh and English Pembrokeshire, namely, the brook at Newgate bridge in the north-east angle of St. Bride's Bay. Hitherto we had been amongst a Welsh-speaking, a Welsh-thinking and a Welsh-descended people. The precise margin allowed on either side of the dividing line matters little, whether a mile or two miles, but at any rate in Haverfordwest, eight miles over it, we are in an English-speaking, English-descended, or its equivalent, and an English-thinking town and country.

Haverfordwest is finely set upon the slope and summit of a steep hill overlooking the deep valley of the Cleddau, which flows through the lower part of the town. It is a prosperous though venerable country town, and has been the most important one in Pembrokeshire for all measurable time. In former days when, for obvious reasons, local society had to be sufficient unto itself for twelve months in the year, the Pembrokeshire magnates had their houses here, whither they repaired in winter and danced, and dined, drank and gossiped, and hunted with a subscription pack of hounds that were kept in the town. Hither came the great colonial families, if you may thus call stocks who had been six or seven centuries in a county. Philips', Lorts', Wogans', Perrots', Matthias', as well as those other bearing the celtic patronymics, Owens, Bowens, Prices, Griffiths, Williams. For if the peasantry of English and Welsh Pembrokeshire left each other severely alone, the gentry of the two divisions and the two races had naturally enough been welded together into one people almost since time, so far as it concerns us, began.

Haverfordwest bears slight resemblance to the little towns that have punctuated our course through west Wales, and which invite the perhaps illogical pleasantry of the passing traveller.

Though many of these have seen strenuous times and sheltered illustrious personages, Haverfordwest has done that, too, and also boasts a finely-situated castle of immense importance



Salva.

in olden times, and above all presents to-day a picture of a flourishing country town of a quite unexceptionable kind. The traveller is now well within that compact region known as

"Little England beyond Wales." Everywhere in the streets of the town, he will hear English spoken, not with the Welsh intonation as in Kington or Hay, Oswestry or Welshpool, but of a kindred strain to that spoken in the heart of England.

I do not want to weary or perplex the reader with any superfluous analysis of the origin of this "Little England" of south Pembrokeshire. The proportions of Saxon, Fleming, Scandinavian, and Irish, that with Norman overlords crystallised in the twelfth century into the present population, concern rather the student of such matters. It is enough that they are as much English as any seaboard region in East Anglia or Devon, who are themselves of a not very dissimilar mixture. The great block of Wales, which cuts them off from the rest of the world, would not seem to have exercised the faintest influence upon them, or to be quite safe from "hair splitting," let us say, till within the last twenty years, which are not of the least consequence in eight hundred. The Welsh boundary is about six miles from Haverfordwest. It will be found roughly traced upon the map at the termination of this book. Nor again is there any natural barrier worth mentioning that has assisted in this unparalleled exclusiveness maintained for nearly eight centuries, and maintained too without any quarrelling, fighting, or violent hatreds such as distinguishes the Scotch-Irishman and the Celt in Ulster, who have nevertheless mingled infinitely more. Perhaps, as an apt illustration of the intense, deep-seated aloofness of English and Welsh Pembrokeshire, I may quote a recent incident of rural life there, contributed by a Pembrokeshire gentleman to a leading London weekly. The Local Board of a small town on the boundary having both Welsh and English districts in its jurisdiction, were injudicious enough to appoint a Welshman, well qualified and not personally unpopular, to the post of relieving officer in an English district. When the new official arrived at the village where his duties lay, though of that rank in life where there is not usually much difficulty in finding suitable quarters, every

householder to whom he applied, though extremely polite, regretted at the same time that his only vacant room had just been bespoken by some expected friend or relation. At last, the local policeman, having perhaps some professional feeling for this homeless dignitary, gave him temporary shelter in his own quarters. But then again, the stranger had a horse and trap, and the horse required food, and no one in the neighbourhood

Haverfordwest.

could be found who could spare a truss of hay or a bushel of oats, so great was the dearth of keep that had suddenly seized the neighbourhood. To shorten the story, the situation grew impossible, and the Board of —— had to ignominiously recall their officer and relegate him to a Welsh district.

With such a cleavage to-day, it is hardly worth quoting George Owen in the early 17th century. "This same

(division) was in ancient time inhabited wholly by Welshmen, a greater part thereof was won from them by the Englishmen under the conduct of Earl Strongbowe, and diverse others and the same planted with Englishmen, whose posteritie enjoy it to this day, and keep their language among themselves without receiving the Welsh speech or learning any part thereof; and hold themselves so close to the same as that to this day, they wonder at a Welshman coming among them; the one neighbour saying to the other 'Look! there goeth a Welshman.' And the sheer is near equally divided between the English speech and the Welsh."

So much ethnology may bore the general reader, but this is after all no subtle distinction for learned bodies to discourse upon; it hits the most callous visitor squarely in the face. The man who came wandering down through Cardiganshire or Carmarthen, and tumbled unawares into this country, without being stirred into curiosity would deserve to ride up and down the London and Portsmouth road for the rest of his life, for the going there is, I believe, the best in England, and there would seem to be no object in courting less perfect highways. Pembrokeshire is no wild waste. It is neither a Mayo nor a Sutherlandshire, where poverty, ignorance, and isolation might conceivably maintain original barriers between half-civilised communities as intact as this. In many parts of Europe again the same conditions might exist without undue anomaly. But here for every practical purpose we are as much in the thick of Anglo-Saxon civilisation and enterprise as in Leicestershire. Indeed the man who travels through South Pembrokeshire putting its splendid sea-coast aside, unless he is a close observer, or an antiquary, might possibly complain that these gentle undulations of pasture fields and bank fences, studded with snug homesteads and tolerably well sprinkled with prosperous country houses, was not precisely what the enterprising tourist goes two hundred miles to see. Pembrokeshire is a county rather for leisurely observation. In its way

it is the most interesting in all Wales, but its way would perhaps be that of a minority, and the most I can hope to do is to inspire that minority with a wish to know something more of it. The two Southern hundreds of the County, those of Roose and Castlemartin, which cover most of English Pembrokeshire, were definitely conquered by the Flemings and the Norman, Arnulph de Montgomery, respectively. Later on the illustrious Strongbow became Earl of Pembroke, and that portion of the modern county roughly represented by the Englishry became a County Palatine and an Earldom. A faithful appendage more or less of the English Crown, it was through all time hostile to the Welsh, but rarely ravaged by them; a distant but most powerful outpost, that had almost no part in the seething turmoil of native princes and Lord Marchers, except to act in the interest of the Crown, on occasions with an effective and ready following of Englishmen behind them. The famous men and families who presided over the County Palatine would fill a book. The first invasion of Ireland by the Norman Welsh of Pembroke—the descendants of Nest mostly, and the founders of the great Irish families of Desmond and Geraldine, is a dramatic story. Haverfordwest alone could tell a moving tale. Henry II. and Richard II. were both here. The latter gave the town its charter while Edward IV. made it a county to itself, a distinction it enjoys to this day, having a High Sheriff and other county officers of its own. It was besieged in vain by many invaders. When the French landed to help Glyndwr they burnt the town, but were helpless before its powerful castle. The Norman-Welsh lordships of Pembrokeshire, Dewisland of the Bishops, and Kemes already so much spoken of, had been by comparison with those of interior Wales almost happy, peaceable, and well governed. And when that notable petition, presented to Henry VIII. by Sir John Price of Brecon, which brought about the political union of Wales and England, was granted and acted upon, all Pembrokeshire became one

in government though so very much divided in race and sympathy.

The Civil War found quite a strong Parliamentary following among the colonial families of Pembrokeshire, almost the only landowners in Wales who went that way, and there were some stubborn conflicts and fierce sieges. The fact that both the Welsh and English peasantry of Pembrokeshire followed their leaders irrespectively of race shows how purely domestic and non-political was the ancient cleavage. There had been a considerable Puritan element among the gentry and burghers of the country. Indeed, Laud had been appointed to the Bishopric of St. David's, mainly with a view to influencing this solitary nest of Puritans in Wales, but he seems to have been very little in his diocese.

Giraldus tells us of a thrilling incident that happened in his day at Haverfordwest Castle. It so happened that a robber chief was confined in the dungeon, and that three sons of the Earl of Pembroke and two of the Governor of the Castle were playmates there together. The boys, it seems, had some difficulty in getting their arrows properly made, and by some means they discovered that the hoary criminal in the dungeon was a master hand at the business. This led to some intercourse with the young archers, who, no doubt, got round the gaoler, while the captive, full of thrilling stories of doughty deeds, must have been a fascinating personality to such lions' cubs as these. With the license procured him as arrow maker it so happened that the prisoner on one occasion found himself alone in his cell with two or three of the children. He then locked himself in with them and swore to those who attempted to break open the door that unless they desisted, and the parents, or those in charge of the castle and the boys, promised him his life and liberty he would kill the children and then himself. There was no choice, says our author, and the astute brigand having received through the keyhole the most solemn assurances marched out of the castle a free man.

It was Henry I., as I have already mentioned, who has the credit of settling the Flemings in Pembrokeshire, and the generally accepted reason for his doing so is that an inundation in the Low Countries rendered a large population suddenly home-

Treffgarne.

less. The King of England, whose wife had been of the country, offered them asylum in England, and sent them to South Pembrokeshire to strengthen the then weak colony against the Welsh. Another tradition says that the Flemings had grown so numerous in England as to become a source of serious

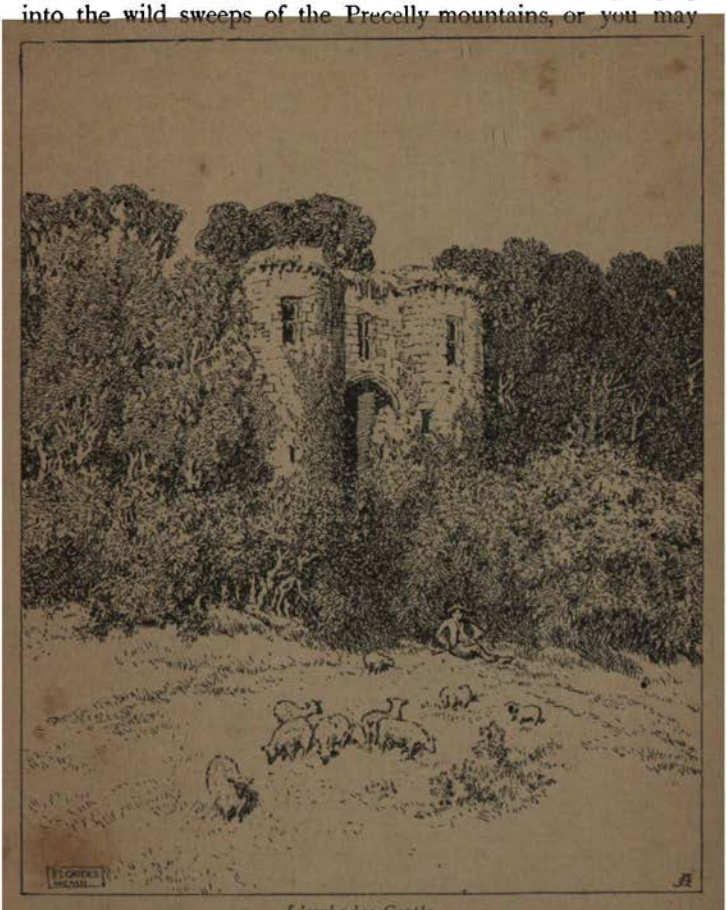
anxiety to the King. The fact is there were almost certainly two, probably three, separate batches of them consigned to West Wales at intervals of several years. And they occupied not only South Pembroke but what is now the sea shore of Carmarthen and the Gower Peninsula in modern Glamorgan, small districts which have always been as English in speech and almost as much so in other ways as South Pembrokeshire.

There are many places of note in the immediate neighbourhood of Haverfordwest. The ruins of Roch Castle will have been seen perched on a craggy hill from the St. David's road, while three miles to the north of the town is Poyston, which belonged to General Picton of Peninsular and Waterloo fame, and is now the residence of a well-known Pembrokeshire author and antiquary. Three or four miles beyond, the plain, English-looking country suddenly gives way, and you enter a gorge in a ridge of hills whose comparatively modest elevation is atoned for by the weird and fantastic displays of jagged rock which frown from their perches over half the county of Pembroke. For two or three miles you follow the tumbling waters of the Cleddau through charming scenes of wood and crag, and winding gorge and emerge upon the other side in Celtic Wales.

These are Trefgarn rocks, and it is almost the only portion of the Anglo-Welsh boundary that is thus defined and defended by nature. It was at Trefgarn Owen, not very far from here, that Glyndwr was born, his mother's people being landowners in this country.

From Haverfordwest too, where I need hardly say there is good accommodation for man, whether with beast or bicycle, a pleasant run of seven or eight miles through Wiston to Llawhaden may be made with much profit. For at Llawhaden are the lordly ruins of the great fortress and palace of the Bishops of St. David's, and at Wiston, though not much remains of it, you may, at any rate, stand upon the site of a historic castle and see a great deal of Pembrokeshire by mounting on the Tump where its fragments still remain. Hence you may look

north over the more broken country of the Welsherie springing into the wild sweeps of the Precelly mountains, or you may



Llawhaden Castle.

face the south and see far over the fatter and smoother country which the English so early made their own. For Wiston Castle was a border fortress and, according to a high authority,

overlooked the most blood-stained spot in all Pembrokeshire in the remote period before the two divisions had "agreed to differ." I hope I do not overrate the view, for I confess I had mine from the top of the fine old church tower up which the vicar kindly piloted me, and furthermore showed me the register, in which the names were about evenly divided between Welsh and English. Many of the latter were very curious, Punch and Hedignos, I remember, not the least so. Wiston was for centuries the seat of one of the most ancient and famous Pembrokeshire families, the Wogans, who, like the walls that sheltered them, have vanished, in name, at any rate, from the earth.

Not so, however, the mightier, and more princely, walls of Llawhaden three miles to the eastward. Laden with ivy and brushed in every breeze by the foliage of encircling tree tops, its towers still defy the ages from the summit of a lofty ridge overhanging the valley of the Cleddau, and look out over the Welsherie. Quite enough of this once magnificent castle remains to give one a striking reminder of the pomp and luxury in which the Bishops of St. David's were once able to indulge either in their own person or through the vassals who held under them. The wretched Barlow, who stripped the lead off the roof of the palace at St. David's for his daughter's dowry, committed the like barbarity at Llawhaden, and here also let in the weather and ruin simultaneously. Many hundred feet below this outstanding group of grey towers and clustering foliage, with its walls almost laved by the bright and tumbling streams of the Cleddau, stands the ancient church of Llawhaden. A fine embattled tower, coated with ivy, a well-kept bowery churchyard overhung by a wooded hill, and a cluster of old cottages make a scene of beauty and peaceful seclusion not easily forgotten.

This, however, is but a brief reference to scenes which after all are off our immediate route. I would only suggest to the stranger who had got thus far that he should return to Haverfordwest by Ridgeway and the main Carmarthen road.

He will then look over the low-lying woodlands of Slebech and Picton Castle, both famous country houses, with the east fork of Milford Haven winding through miles of foliage. Slebech was an old commandery of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and is now the property of Baron de Rutzen. Picton is one of the most historic country houses in South Wales. It came to the Philipps through an heiress in the early Tudor period, and is still owned by a bearer of the name,

Llawhaden.

though, I think, of a different stock. The castle was stormed by the Royalists, the then owner being a Roundhead, and was afterwards stoutly defended by them, and the last castle in Pembrokeshire to hold for the king. Unlike most others it was never injured by Cromwell, and is regarded on that account as a very complete specimen of an earlier residential fortress.

I have mentioned the road near Wiston and Llawhaden as skirting the Welsherie. My journey on it was the first occa-

sion on which an opportunity had been given me of hearing that curious English speech of Pembrokeshire, curious, that is to say, by virtue of its origin and maintenance. After months of wandering among both languages in South Wales, where each strongly influences, or has influenced, the other, I will admit to a sensation of prodigious curiosity to hear this Little England speech, and more particularly at such close quarters with the Welsh. I am afraid the excuses I made for impeding the progress of travelling rustics, and for bringing more than one busy housewife to her cottage door, were miserably lame ones, if these good souls had only known. As it was they no doubt regarded me merely as a somewhat garrulous foreigner, with a deplorable ignorance of the geography of the district. A certain variety here was inevitable, and indeed the last twenty years has, I am told, modified the rigidity of the barrier of former days. More than one reason for this has been given me by those who should best know. Welsh preachers serving the chapels of Little England, and schoolmasters moving more freely about, is one cause assigned, another is the sympathy created by hard times among the farming as against the landlord interest; and a yet further one the feeling aroused of late on the Church question. For South Pembrokeshire, though stronger than most Welsh regions in churchmen, unless it be the Welsh-speaking districts about the Lower Teify in Carmarthenshire, is still greatly given to Nonconformity.

But to return to Wiston, my first interview on that particular morning was with a couple of women standing in the highway, the mistresses evidently of as many cottages which faced each other across the road. One, oddly enough, talked the familiar Welsh-English, while the other spoke the uncompromising dialect of South Pembrokeshire. Here seemed a direct illustration of the stories one hears: quite true ones, I believe, of the two races facing each other down the street of a village and mixing in neither language nor marriage. I had thus amused myself in discourse with all and sundry along a

not very populous and not greatly travelled road, and was making a last experiment at an ordinary Pembrokeshire thatched and whitewashed cottage. There was no doubt about the Saxon ring of this good housewife's speech. I was prepared for a variety of Wilts or Dorset, but not quite for this. It was enough to make the Precelly hills turn pale, and the streams of the Cleddau run back affrighted to their source. If a few moments of perplexity supervened, and I fancied I had struck a variety of South Pembrokeshire dialect, that sounded an anti-Celtic note with somewhat superfluous violence, it was simply that the seclusion of this leafy cot in so remote a country made the thought for a moment inconceivable. But wonderment soon gave way to a dull suspicion, which more searching inquiry ripened into certainty: "We're straingers 'ere, sir, and ain't bin long come daown from up abaout London."

The road from Haverfordwest which strikes Milford Haven at New Milford, where the ferry crosses to Pembroke town, is about eight miles in length. It runs southwards through the hundred of Roos, the upper one of those two divisions which form Anglo-Flemish Pembrokeshire. These canny and thrifty colonists secured the fatness and smoothness of the country, while to the ousted Welsh was given the compensation of the picturesque, whatever that may have been then worth. So the curious traveller in this district must content himself mainly with the world of man past and present, rather than the achievements of nature. It is an open undulating land, nearly bereft of wood and closely fenced, and nowadays mostly laid to grass, sprinkled, like most of Wales, with small homesteads and greatly given to the raising of black cattle of the Castle Martin breed. The houses are stone, and often quaint. The churches are everywhere a contrast to those of Wales, generally being large for the most part and throwing up lofty towers. Here and there the ancient Celtic names have survived but for the most part the villages ring as English as the people. Freystrop, Clareston, Johnston, Hayston, Rosemarket, Hough-

ton, is the kind of thing that lies all about us; names far older, too, than those which cover the map of Ulster with somewhat similar import and recall the well-armed buccaneers who founded families on the ruins of the Celt.

Milford Haven, blue and sparkling, as I saw it, at any rate, when running down the long slope to the waterside, and a mile perhaps in width, winds delightfully through this country and throws out arms here and there, which give variety to a landscape that away from its sea coast somewhat lacks distinction. It is well, too, to be careful here. The only sign-post I saw in the whole of Pembrokeshire—and there is no county in Wales where for many reasons they are so urgently needed—led me to the wrong ferry. Instead of directing me to the steam ferry at New Milford it landed me on a lonely beach from which a row boat propelled by a pair of sculls struggles fitfully backwards and forwards over a mile of water, buffeted by winds and swept by rushing tides. The view, however, is delightful down the broad winding fiord with New Milford on the north shore and Pembroke dock with its shipping on the south: elsewhere woods, fields and farms slope pleasantly to the tide. I had a full hour too, for the enjoyment of all this, for the ferry boat was on the other side peacefully reclining on the beach and its crew, so I was informed by a sympathetic native, was discussing his dinner in a very conspicuous public-house beyond. I had plenty of leisure to think of George Greville and the future Lady Hamilton, whose charms were bartered away for the price which laid the foundations of Milford Haven in the commercial and national sense as we see it now. I had just been reading, in a country house in Pembrokeshire, the remarkable correspondence of the four people concerned in this strange domestic drama, and it is necessary to begin with those of Emma Hart to Greville from her solitude at Milford to realise how devoted she was to him and how much of pathos there was in the earlier stages of the story.

One fare was assuredly not enough to tempt the most

energetic and mercenary of ferrymen away from his cakes and ale over nearly a mile of somewhat fretful water! People generally shouted, I was informed, and being really in a hurry I tried the experiment with some fruitless assiduity, for the anxiously scanned front of that waterside tavern remained blankly and persistently unresponsive. However, some other passengers better versed in the local customs arrived and

St. Govan's Head.

eventually, after a stormy voyage in a very small boat I was transferred from the bounds of Roos to those of Castle Martin, and was soon in the little old town of Pembroke, which is some two miles from Pembroke Dock.

From Pembroke, where there is an eminently respectable hostelry, the whole coast to the south and south-east may be conveniently explored, and it is well worth it. The interior of

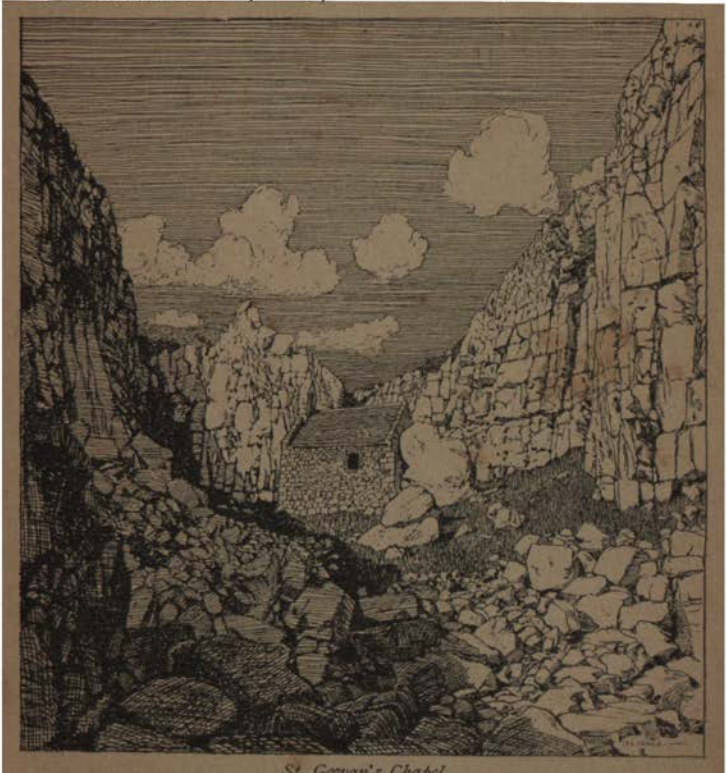
this Castle Martin strip is much like the rest—rolling stretches of small grass farms, dotted with villages and fine stone churches, and somewhat bare of timber save where great country seats like Stacpole break the landscape. But the traveller other than the antiquary, for whom as elsewhere in the county there is here abounding interest, will follow the coast, where the full force of the Atlantic is hurled upon an almost unbroken barrier of limestone cliffs.

From St. Gowan's Head, six miles south of Pembroke, you may look both to the east and to the west along as jagged and cruel a front as any land so full of human interest ever offered to the mariner and to the ocean. The country too seems to attune itself to the sea coast as you approach it. Homesteads grow scarce and fences fade away into sheep-fed commons as you draw near the brink of somewhat awesome precipices of grey limestone against whose feet the waves rage continuously, bursting here and there far into deep and narrow caves or looming in inaccessible caverns. Vast flocks of sea-birds, guillemots, puffins and "Eligugs" and still rarer varieties crowd upon giant crags that rise in majestic isolation from the waves.

Peregrine falcons were once common on this coast and Giraldus, who was born and brought up at Manorbier Castle, close by, tells with the pride of a native how Henry II. when hawking here let fly a Norwegian hawk at a falcon to the Northern bird's instant undoing. For the falcon struck it dead at the first encounter and its body fell at the king's feet. After this young falcons from these cliffs were sent every year to the royal mews.

It was a sad and sombre October afternoon that I took a stroll along the lonely cliff ridges from St. Gowan's Head to Bullslaughter Bay. The equinox had smitten Pembrokeshire with tremendous force a day or two before and its scant wood lands were gasping above a wreck of twigs and boughs and prematurely stripped of half their leaves. Nature was wearied and sullen. The sky hung an unbroken pall of grey, the sea

was leaden to the horizon, and though not a breath of air stirred, was still heaving with the memory of the recent storms and chaunting, in a deep key among the rocks and caverns below. The limestone cliffs, alone, from contrast doubtless with the



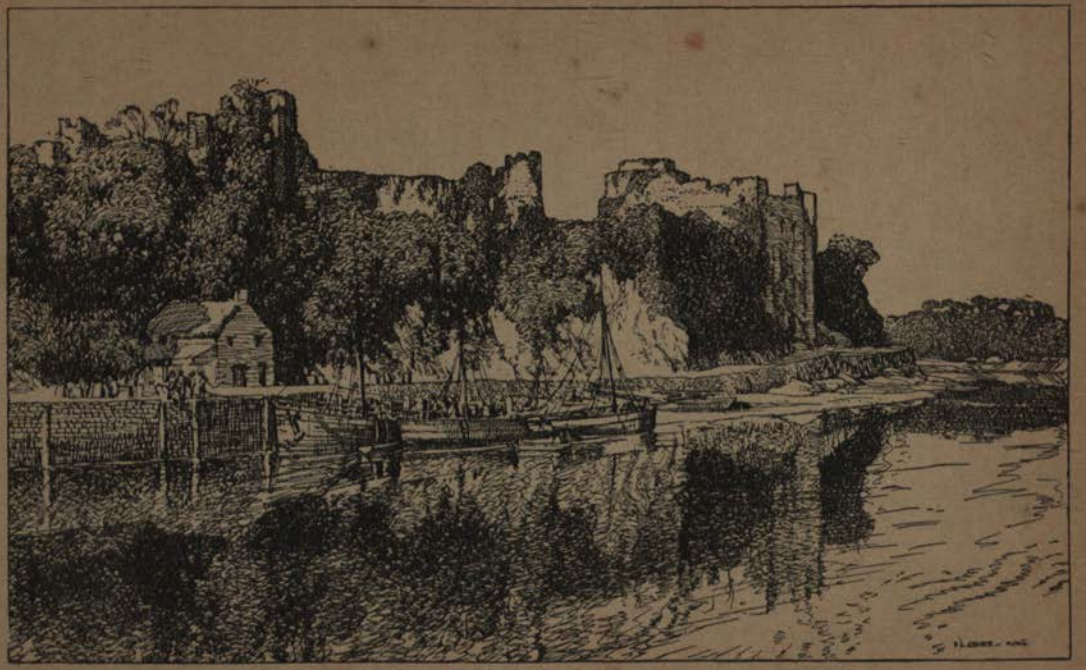
St. Govan's Chapel.

darkness of sky and sea, since the sun was setting somewhere behind a dusky veil, shone almost as white as the wings of the gulls that swept across them or floated on the swell. Daylight was failing when I got back to the farmhouse and started for Pembroke, and the long grey ridges of Castle Martin waving away

north to Milford Haven and west to Freshwater Bay, with the lacework of fences and tall militant looking church towers, seemed a thought sad as they faded into the night.

Pembroke Castle was one of the largest and strongest fortresses in the whole kingdom and is still among the noblest of our ruins. It stands up on a rocky promontory in an inlet of Milford Haven with its landward side looking down upon the town, and should be approached for choice when the tide is high. The massive walls, so pounded by Cromwell's guns, still surround the huge grass-grown enclosure, and sink their feet deep into the rocky steeps that lend further dignity to their stature. Many of the buildings in part survive and the round keep still lifts its eighty feet of masonry intact above the ground.

The centre of government and defence of the county Palatine and earldom of Pembroke and virtually on the shores of the great harbour of the south-west, Pembroke was of enormous importance. Cut off from England by eighty miles of a hostile or semi-hostile and warlike population, it had a part to play, in early life at any rate, that had no counterpart in the comparatively peaceful lives of the baronial castles in most of England. Indeed, the early centuries from Gerald de Windsor till Glyndwr and his Frenchmen fell back from its walls on their march from Milford to Worcester are too thick with incident to admit of even allusion here. Henry VII., however, must have a word, seeing that he was born and spent the first ten years of his life in the castle which was held by his uncle, Jasper, till his attainder, when both uncle and nephew retired to Brittany. Still more since the latter when he came back to win the crown of England, and incidentally to unite Wales in heart as well as in law to her old oppressor, landed, as everyone knows, within its walls on the shores of Milford Haven. But since one has perforce to pick and choose from such a wealth of story as Pembroke treasures, a few words on the part it played both for and against Cromwell, and his friends, may possibly be most acceptable here, as nearer to our own time.



Pembroke Castle.

Pembroke town and castle indeed took quite a conspicuous part in the Civil War. It was the only place in Wales that declared at once for the Parliament. An active mayor of humble birth, one Poyer, and a Mr. Laugharne, of St. Bride's, were the leaders from the first beginning till the final close of the whole drama. The tide of success ebbed and flowed with curious completeness throughout South Wales. After the initial success inevitable to a country where the mass of the population was for the king and all hostility had been either stifled or driven within the walls of Pembroke, things took a curious turn. The Parliamentary fleet were driven by stress of weather in 1644 into Milford Haven for a long sojourn just in time, not only to save Pembroke, but to enable Laugharne to move against the Royalists. Two years of necessary but irritating exactions had cooled the royal ardour of "the three counties," and the Pembroke Roundheads subdued not only their own but the neighbouring shires of Cardigan and Carmarthen for the Parliament. Again, however, fortune turned, and Sir Charles Gerard soon reduced the not unwilling people to their old allegiance, and penned the Roundheads up once more in Pembroke. Gerard, the king's commander in South Wales, more active but less considerate than the recent local leader, Lord Carberry, offended all classes and made the way less difficult for the Parliament men to advance again when the waning fortunes of the king's cause made the movement general. Pembroke remained untaken throughout the war, and exercised an enormous influence on the Parliament side throughout South Wales.

Its dramatic moment came in 1648 when the war was virtually over, and the troops were everywhere being disbanded and paid off. Poyer, the indomitable ex-mayor and militant Puritan leader through all these years, almost alone in Wales, for reasons too doubtful and complex to note here, refused to give up his post, carrying with him Laugharne and other leaders, and lighting the embers of the moribund loyalist cause

throughout South Wales. Sir John Owen of Clenneny had risen in Carnarvonshire, but had been easily put down. The insurrection in the south was far more serious. Poyer mustered

Pembroke Castle—Gateway.

the county of Pembroke on Colby Moor, in spite of the aloofness of the leading gentry, and advancing through Glamorgan, a fierce battle was fought at St. Fagans, where the insurgents were routed with a loss of many killed and three thousand

prisoners. Cromwell was now coming himself with his Ironsides and scattering the half-hearted to their homes, rolled the stalwarts back into Pembroke, where a really memorable siege closed the war.

"A very desperate enemy, very many of them gentlemen of quality, and thoroughly resolved," wrote Cromwell, and one of the strongest places in the country. The battering train was insufficient, and shot and shell had to be cast in the iron furnaces of Carmarthen; but Cromwell had quite sufficient force to starve the garrison into surrender. The fanatical Hugh Peters, however, must have tried him much, particularly as he had the gout; for the fiery preacher had rashly prophesied that the walls of Pembroke would fall down before them as did those of Jericho before the hosts of Israel. And, in spite, apparently, of Cromwell, the mad attack was made. But the walls of Pembroke Castle were of more stubborn material, and the men behind them worthy of the walls, and the attempt was disastrous. After a month's siege, however, starvation and lack of water—for the well had been captured—compelled surrender on the 11th of July. Those leaders who had been consistent loyalists Cromwell let off with the mild sentence of two years' exile. Poyer, Laugharne, and Powell, all renegades, were sent to the Tower, tried in the following spring, and condemned to death. One victim, however, was regarded as sufficient, and lots were drawn. On two papers was written "Life given by God," the third was a blank. Poyer drew the blank, and the sturdy Puritan upstart who had become, not wholly to their liking, a leader among the South Welsh Royalist gentry, was shot upon the piazza of Covent Garden, dying bravely as he had lived.

A certain amount of extraneous animation must be imparted to Pembroke by the near neighbourhood of Pembroke Dock and New Milford, with their military and naval visitors. But in itself it is a sleepy-looking old market town of a single important street, running along the crest of a ridge. There is an inter-

esting parish church and a ruined priory at Monkton, just outside. When I was at Pembroke, however, or happily just as I left it, there was no lack of animation, and the material was present for a great deal more as the day progressed; for the great annual October hiring fair had filled the streets quite early in the morning—not with the intended hirelings, for in the present state of the rural labour market these are only just numerous enough to make an excuse for the function—but with the various caterers for the amusement of the crowd.

That this was a "day out," for the Castle Martin division of the county at any rate, became very evident indeed as I pursued my way along an undulating road, through a fat English-looking country towards Carew Castle. There were literally hundreds of people setting towards Pembroke, tricked out in their Sunday best; and it was strange to think that there was no Welsh blood worth mentioning among the whole lot of them. One looks for the Flemish type in the thick set men, and comely rosy women, and no doubt finds it, to one's own satisfaction! Some are afoot, some in traps and carts; and I have never seen quite so many people habitually piled up behind a single horse as on this Pembroke highway. Not a soul was on horseback, however, whereas in Cardigan and Carmarthen you would see many score of horsemen, and horsewomen too, in such a crowd as this.

Carew Castle is magnificent and unique. Conspicuous in a spacious meadow on the banks of an inlet of Milford Haven, its walls still stand for the most part roof high. It is the joy of picnickers, the admiration of all who have eyes to see, and the particular delight of antiquaries, since it presents the rare combination of a mediæval castle and a splendid Tudor residence. The original building dates from the time of the first Norman conquest of Pembroke and of Gerald de Windsor, the husband of Nest. His descendants, the Carews, or Careys (as here pronounced), owned it for several genera-

tions. When Henry VII. landed at Milford it had come into the possession of his staunch supporter Rhys ap Thomas, who entertained the king here on his march to Bosworth. The enormous windows, still in most cases retaining their mullioned frames, speak eloquently of Tudor taste and magnificence. The

Carew Castle.

massive gateways and tall flanking towers and barbican tell as plainly of the days of Welsh and Norman strife.

As it is quite certain we cannot trace the fortunes of Carew Castle here, since they are practically identified with every stage of Pembroke's stirring story, we must be content with a glimpse of that wonderful pageant with which Sir Rhys

ap Thomas celebrated his own and his master's glory, and the new union of England and Wales. It was a really historic incident, and significant of a good deal more than the picturesque display which has caught the fancy of every chronicler of Welsh affairs.

For over twenty years after he had so materially helped to place Henry Tudor on the throne, Sir Rhys had served the king zealously in wars at home and abroad. He had been created a Knight of the Garter for his capture of Perkin Warbeck, and had been long Governor of Wales, and much the greatest as well as the wealthiest personage in the Principality, and the first pure Cymro to occupy that position, though under such different circumstances, since Owen Glyndwr or Llewelyn ap Iorwerth. In 1507, when growing old in honours, Rhys determined to set a seal on them by an entertainment worthy of the occasion, and invited to Carew Castle, the most splendid of his many seats, the *élite* of all Wales and of the West. His hospitalities were to take the form of a tournament in honour of St. George, Patron Saint of England, and of the Order of the Garter. A thousand guests responded to his invitation, and were accommodated for five days in the castle and in marquees pitched in the Park. Perrotts, Wogans, Herberts, Morgans, Butlers, Vaughans, Dunns, Mansels, and all the great families of the South Wales Marches were there; while from the North, Penrhyn, Gwydir, and other famous houses contributed their quota.

On St. George's Eve Sir Rhys formed five hundred of his more able-bodied and distinguished guests into five companies of a hundred each under five captains. At daybreak on St. George's Day, with the blare of trumpets and roll of drums, the entire company rode to the Bishop's Palace at Lamphey, whose ruins still stand some two miles distant. Here having fired a salute before the gates they repaired to hear Mass in the Chapel, where the Bishop of St. David's, the Abbot of Talley, and Prior of Carmarthen officiated. After this, they marched back in the

same order, accompanied by the bishop, and his following to Carew, where they found hung over the great gate a painting representing St. George and St. David embracing each other.

Entering the gate the procession passed between two hundred of Rhys's retainers all attired in blue livery to the Inner Court, where groups of figures, clad in armour and bearing the escutcheons of Rhys's ancestors, were drawn up in array. The great hall beyond was hung with tapestry, and a table draped in crimson velvet was set for the King, or rather in his honour, at the upper end. Down either side were two long tables, one of which, so majestic a person was Sir Rhys, was set for him alone, the other for his guests. First of all, however, though their appetites must have been by this time sharp, a very solemn ordeal had to be observed. The trumpets sounded and the herald called for the king's service. Then young Rhys, the Court bred son of a magnificent father, went forward as server, followed by a chosen group of the guests. Sir William Herbert carved for the absent king. Sir Rhys and the bishop stood on either side of his empty chair, and after another flourish of trumpets the prelate said grace. In due course the untouched food was removed from the royal table and the king's chair turned round as a signal that he had finished!

Then the great assembly, who had stood with heads reverently bared, resumed their hats and prepared for more serious business. Rhys and the bishop took their seats at one of the long tables and the guests at the other. But not only was this exclusive arrangement not resented by the gorgeous throng at the second table, but their veneration for the host was so great that they would not touch a mouthful, we are told; till he and his episcopal neighbour had finished their first course.

After that, the fun began. The toasts of the royal family were drunk with loud applause; the bards came in with their harps, eloquent we may be sure not only on the oft sung glories of the ancestors of those present, but on the peaceful

triumph of Wales, the grand fulfilment of the ancient prophecies of their own order; the occupation of the British throne by a Welsh born and a Welsh descended king. It is true South Pembrokeshire was not in the abstract the ideal spot for such form of jubilation. But "Little England" had been strongly Tudor, Rhys himself had captured its devotion or at least its allegiance, and this after all was a cosmopolitan gathering, so far as Welshmen of all kinds, Normans, Flemings and Celts, were concerned, and indeed it was meant to be symbolical of British Unity and a final "burying of the hatchet."

Dinner lasted most of the day, but one is glad to note that all the company were able to walk in the park afterwards, and to sit quietly through a discourse from "Father Rhys" in the evening and eat a good supper afterwards.

Next morning the more serious business had to be attended to. Sir Rhys, in gilt armour, amid a cloud of personal attendants and two hundred retainers in blue livery, rode out to the tilting ground and seated himself on the judge's chair. The contests had been arranged the night before—and went off amicably, though great precautions had been taken, men with staves being stationed to strike up the weapons when blood-letting seemed imminent. Tourneys, it may be remembered, had gone somewhat out of fashion, and Sir Rhys may well have been anxious. The combatants engaged in parties of four on a side with lance and sword for the honour of the ladies, who seem most ungallantly to have been left out altogether in this memorable and gigantic "house party." But every one kept their temper beautifully, and embraced all round after each bout.

In the afternoon there were athletic sports, and in the evening at supper Sir William Herbert challenged Sir Rhys's son to another contest on the morrow, the loser to stand a supper at Carmarthen. Sir William stipulated that the young heirs of Gwydir and Penrhyn, from North Wales, should join in the fray, but the boys were under sixteen and there was some anxiety

about them. However, the tourney came off without hurt, and Sir Rhys graciously gave the award against his own son, so that the prospective supper at Carmarthen fell to his providing. With an eye to this as well as to his guests' amusement, they all went hunting in the park, and slew several deer which were forwarded on for the feast. On the next evening there were theatricals, and in the morning the vast company listened to a farewell sermon from the bishop. After this, they all bade adieu to their host, and round the necks of the chief gentlemen among them Sir Rhys hung a medal with the motto, "Nec potent ferrum," with hands clasped above it, and begged them to wear it for his sake. The whole party then rode off to Carmarthen, thirty miles away, under charge of Sir Rhys's son, to the wind-up supper, a form of entertainment which it will have been gathered from an earlier chapter that the old town upon the Towy was well qualified to cater for. Perhaps the most surprising thing about this truly regal function, as all historians have noted, was the fact that a thousand fiery souls armed to the teeth, and so far as we know unrestrained by the presence of ladies, spent five days in each other's company without a cross word or a cross look being exchanged. One might perhaps fancy that the Carmarthen supper was a good deal more rowdy than the decorous if ample feasts at Carew Castle, with the royal ghost at one table, and the bishop and Sir Rhys at another.

Lamphey Court, the old Episcopal palace already mentioned, should, of course, be included in any visit to these parts. So indeed should a score of interesting houses, churches and ruins, which space forbids our even noticing here.

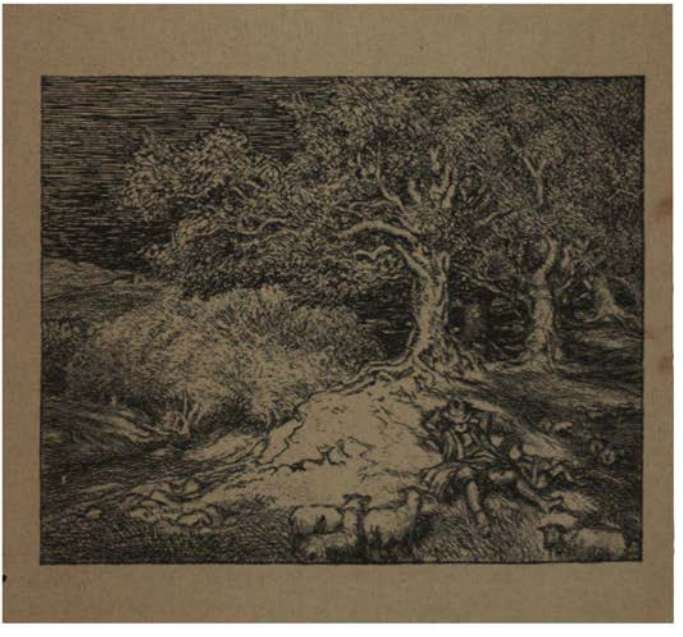
There is a fine carved cross, however, fourteen feet high, by the roadside opposite Carew Castle which must not be overlooked, and the parish church containing the monuments of the Carew family is interesting and capacious. A mile or so south of it one climbs on to what is known as the Ridgeway, a long road which traverses the top of a ridge running for many miles in the direction of Tenby. It commands fine outlooks

Tenby.

over the sea coast on one side, and away across country to the north, and the Precelly mountains on the other. The beautiful old ruin of Manorbier too, with the church and village of that name, lies down here below us on the lip of a small bay. The castle, which has been partly restored for habitation, is chiefly famous as the birthplace of Giraldus, our oft-quoted author. It was built at the Norman settlement and became a ruin before the time of Elizabeth. Spacious and magnificent, however, as it was, Manorbier seems to have been outside the current of strife, and played scarcely any part in the bloody dramas of mediæval or Cromwellian times. Tales of smuggling, for which business it was a notorious resort, are probably the wickedest it could tell. It is a prodigious drop down to it from the Ridgeway, and a proportionate climb back again. Hence, it is five miles to Tenby, the sea-coast the whole way, though the little that can be seen of it from the road is superb. Lydstep Bay and promontory, where its owner, Mr. Wynford Phillips, has a house on the seashore, is a little world to itself of crags and coves, with the large island of Caldy lying a couple of miles out to sea, and containing a population of forty to fifty souls, a gentleman's house and a considerable farm. In George Owen's time the inhabitants of the island, he tells us, dare not use horses as they were promptly carried off by pirates.

Of Tenby itself, its history, its charms and its neighbourhood a chapter, nay, a book might be written. But I have come to the end of my tether in merely reaching it. It is far better known by strangers than any other place in south-west Wales, and one can well understand its popularity, for it is quite out of the common-place among seaside resorts, and full of character. A rocky promontory, on which the ruined castle stands, cuts it into two distinct bays. There are beautiful sands, overhung by a leafy ridge, on whose crest the town stands, commanding to the east and to the west glorious views of the wild coast of Pembrokeshire. Its present reputation is that of a

bright and important watering-place with a considerable residential population, good golf links and excellent bathing, and it requires the grim fragments of the castle rock to remind one that the place played an important part in Welsh history since time began, and ethnologically is a stronghold of the Anglo-Flemish breed and speech.



Near Brecon.

CHAPTER XII.

WHILE most people will be leaving Tenby by train, the cyclist may ride the thirty miles to Carmarthen with much profit. He will go by Saundersfoot and Amroth Castle, and see a good deal of a consistently fine coast line. He will pass, moreover, through that south-eastern strip of Carmarthenshire which shares the Anglo-Flemish origin and character of southern Pembroke. He will behold the fine ruins of Laugharne Castle, overlooking the estuary of the Taff and Towy; and thence, passing into Welsh Wales again, will cross the Taff at St. Clears, memorable for a defeat and slaughter of Glyndwr's vanguard by the men of Pembroke, and so, through a pleasant undulating country to Carmarthen town. Here I am going to whisk him away at once up the Vale of Towy, over ground already traversed, to the academic shades of Llandovery. And this, I might add, would so far be all on the road home for any one who had followed more or less in our steps and like ourselves was debarred from crossing the frontiers of Glamorgan.

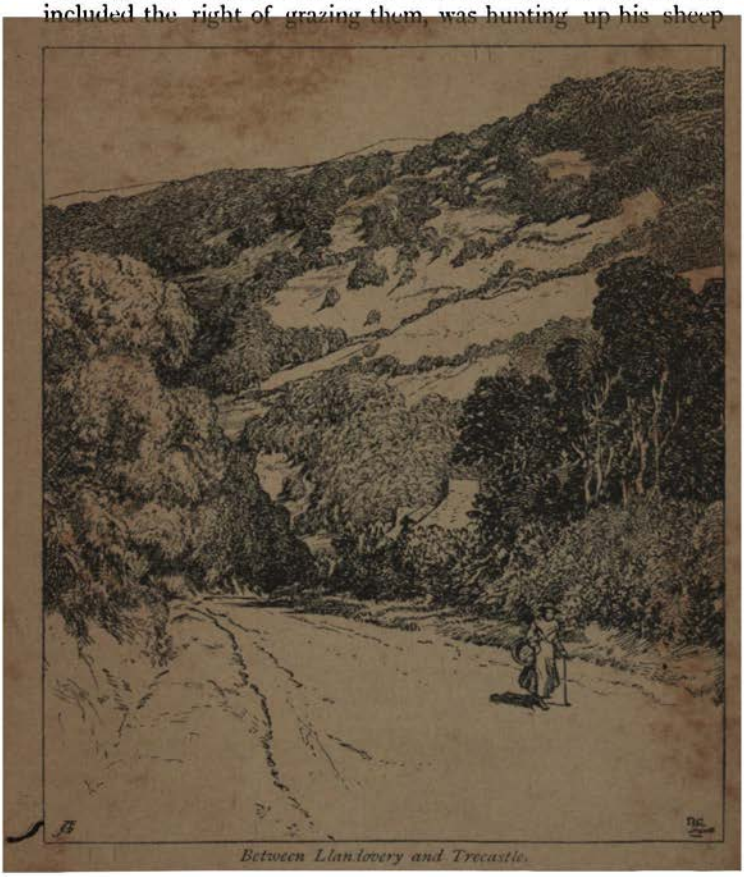
Indeed of all ways for the road traveller who would enter the heart of Breconshire, which is my object here, this is perhaps the pleasantest. For up that cheery mountain brook the Gwydderig, which coming from the east meets the Towy at Llandovery, the old coach road to London climbs by gentle grades to the Usk watershed at Trecastle, that nine miles away stands high perched upon the Brecon frontier. We have been much in the wilder and more northerly parts of that delightful county at an early stage of our little journey, but I purpose to devote the remainder of these pages to that central and southern portion where its heart most loudly beats, namely, the vale of Usk.

Wherefore we must not linger in the winding and wooded dingle that once formed the main passage for the men of Ystrad, Towy, and Welsh Wales in general, into England and the eastern marches. Besides the general charm of the scenery and the soothing companionship of the plashing stream by the roadside, only one detail is much burnt into my memory upon this nine miles, though I have often travelled them. For at a spot where the coach-road overhangs a wooded defile, a conspicuous stone obelisk rears its head upon the opposite bank. The least curious would not pass it, for the fact that it is set there for some purpose other than to mark a mere district or county bound is evident enough. Having regard to the formation of the roadway just here, you will be prepared for some tale of disaster, and will not be disappointed. Indeed, when you have perused the somewhat inconsequent story to the end you will, I am sure, be glad that you did so. Having braced yourself for a tale of horror, and the tablet opening in quite promising fashion with a description of how the coach plunged over the precipice, hurling into space various local celebrities whose names and addresses, if I remember right, are here immortalised, you are quite prepared to drop the tributary and sympathetic tear even in so far a retrospect for their now dead and gone wives and families. It comes as quite a

pleasant surprise then to learn that all these gentlemen were gathered up in the dingle below, apparently not very much the worse for the shaking. But neither the nature of their bruises nor the good fortune of their escape turns out to be the motive of the memorial monument, which was apparently raised for the sole purpose of proclaiming that the coachman was drunk, to point a moral, in short, and to adorn a tale, and the consequences of too much cwrw are here blazoned forth for all time in a practical fashion that calls forth one's admiration even if it provokes a smile. The only person for whom one can reasonably be expected to feel compassion is the unlucky Jehu, and it does seem hard both on him and his descendants that his indiscretion should be thus invidiously perpetuated by an indestructible monument. It occurs to me that the fund raised for the purpose might have been utilised for a memorial to Glyndwr or Llewelyn ap Griffith, on the top of the Sugar Loaf or the Carmarthen Vans hard by, neither of these great patriots, so far as I know, having received even this much attention from the mason's chisel.

Speaking of the Carmarthen Bannau, or beacons, one is brought face to face with them in most striking fashion at Trecastle. They constitute in fact the last great effort of the Black Mountains towards their Southern limits, and are here within three or four miles of us, and the fact of their rising out of deep valleys between gives them a distinction much greater than their height of 2,600 feet would warrant. Their summits are sharp, and the boundary of Brecon and Carmarthen runs through a gorge between them. Their sides are wild and sometimes rocky and broken by shadowy glens that seem to lead into recesses where eerie memories might lurk, and the spirit of solitude must surely do so. Strange things have occurred in these mountains, and not a peasant within sight of these Carmarthen peaks, and indeed very few people in South Wales, but know the legend of the Llyn-y-van-fach. This last is one of two lonely sheets of water high up among the hollows of

the hills, and once upon a time, at a period extremely remote, a young farmer whose homestead adjoined the mountains, and included the right of grazing them, was hunting up his sheep



Between Llanlovery and Trecastle.

near the lake when he beheld a wonderful sight. For three beauteous females came out of the water, and approached him with ravishing glances. Fear and astonishment soon gave way to more tender feelings when the extraordinary beauty

of the trio began to work on the heart of the susceptible swain. Taking courage, and following no doubt the prompt and practical methods of love-making in vogue among twelfth century rustics in Wales, he attempted their capture without more ado. But this they easily evaded, disappearing into the lake again with the most provoking facility. For several days the enamoured grazier haunted the lake-side, and each time was tantalised in this distressing fashion.

There was no faint heart, however, about this lover, and his persistence reaped its meet reward, for at length the fairies not only granted him an interview, but in answer to his urgent overtures consented that, if he made choice of one, and on the next day could distinguish her from her companions, for they were exactly alike, that the same would consent to be his wife. He noticed in the meantime that the sandal of one of these water nymphs was tied in a peculiar way, some versions say the lady winked in the direction of her foot, but at any rate he picked her out again without any difficulty, and she consented to come and live with him at the farm below. She furthermore promised to make him a good and true wife, until such time as he hit her thrice without cause. Such a stipulation seemed of course waste of breath to the enthusiastic lover, and the bargain was promptly struck. But the lady of the lake was not to come empty-handed, and a wave of her arm brought several milk cows in fine condition stalking out of the water, and the happy procession wended its way down to the homestead.

The match, though not blest apparently by the priest, turned out a complete success. Four sons were born to the pair, and not a breeze had so far disturbed the domestic hearth. One fateful day, the husband asked the wife to go on some trifling errand for him, and as she was a little slow in starting, he playfully tapped her on the shoulder three times saying "Go! go! go!"

It was all over, the wife of his bosom vanished like a dream,

and so did the cows she had brought with her, and the unhappy man, who recalled the conditions of their compact, was left lamenting and alone. The four sons, however, yet remained to him, and during their boyhood they used to wander often round the lake shore, wondering whether the beautiful mother they could just remember would ever return again to them from its dark depths. One day some years afterwards, and once only, did she actually appear to them, telling them she had no power to remain, but presenting each with a little bag as a talisman that should be the making of his fortune in life.

The boys grew up with such a wonderful intuition for surgery—and the demand for surgeons in the thirteenth century, in the vales of Towy and Usk, must have been brisk—that they became quite famous, and not only that, but their almost magical gifts remained with their descendants for two or three centuries, and the "physicians of Myddfai" as a tribe were as great a fact in the life of this district as the legend of their origin was notorious.

About half a mile short of Trecastle is the ancient church of Llywell—full of memorials of bygone families of note who once flourished in this high and narrow vale. Gwyns, Jeffreys, Watkins, Morgans, and many more armigers lie under the shady turf of the graveyard or the stone floor of the church—their small manor houses vanished or inhabited by working farmers. Few or no gentry live thus far up nowadays. Hemmed in by the Epynt on one side and the Black Mountains on the other, to say nothing of railroad development, the district has long since dropped out of count as a leading artery of travel. A curious legend relates that the Gwyns, whose mansion became afterwards the Camden Arms in Trecastle, had the waters of the stream dammed into a large lake, and were wont to go to church by water in a gorgeous barge. Wonderful pedigrees may have flourished up here in olden days, indeed they did, but hardly, I think, such superfluous luxuries as this.

The Usk at Venyvach.

Trecastle, set so high up in this cleft of hills, is a venerable-looking village. It has an air of bygone importance about its old grey roofs and thick stone walls, washed over with white or pink; its abundant foliage waving above the chimneys, its stream plunging far below, with the mountains climbing high into the sky above.

In half a mile we are over the watershed and running down into the heart of Brecon by the infant streams of Usk. Dyvennock lies beyond in the valley, and the Brecon beacons, "Bannau Brycheiniog," show us once again their noble outlines, and this time from the western side. The River Senni, at the somewhat modern-looking village of that name, now joins the Usk, and a railroad slipping through the Black Mountains from Glamorganshire enters the valley at the same time. The semi-wild and out-of-the-world look gives way now to signs of ornate life; and about eight miles above Brecon the actual Vale of Usk may be said fairly to begin.

The origin of the name of the district, which now more or less represents the County of Brecknock, commonly called Brecon, pierces the mists of antiquity and involves some pretty romance. Soon after the Romans left Britain it was known as Garthmadryn, "the place of foxes," and was ruled over by a monarch named Tewdrig. He had an only daughter, Marchell, whose valuable life was in some jeopardy from ill-health. The air of Ireland was prescribed by her physicians, so to Ireland she went, attended by three hundred men and twelve maidens. But the people of Wexford, not dreaming that the flotilla was merely the suite of a young lady coming over for change of air, gathered in threatening manner on the shore. The prince of the district was there with twelve knights, a rather suspiciously suitable number for a true tale, and a considerable force. But when the object of the visit was understood, all went smoothly. The twelve Irish knights married the twelve Welsh maidens, and the Princess Marchell married the Irish prince, apparently without any troublesome preliminaries with

her absent parent. She only stipulated that if a son were born he should be taken back to Wales. This auspicious event occurred in due course, and the couple returned to Garthmadryn, and to Gaer, its capital, which we shall shortly pass near Brecon. The lad was called Brychan, and, at his grandfather's death, inherited his kingdom, which was called Brycheiniog. He reigned for half a century, had three wives and fifty children, all of whom were saints, and have left their names scattered about South Wales.

We will not follow the dynasty through the struggles with Dane and Saxon. It will be enough to say that Blethin ap Mainarch, the last native prince, fought through the hurly burly of internecine wars and filibustering Normans, which particularly distracted Wales in the reign of William Rufus, and was ultimately killed, bravely fighting for his patrimony, against Bernard de Newmarch, the Norman conqueror of Brycheiniog. We heard something of this acquisitive, overbearing personage in an earlier chapter. Indeed, it is impossible to go into Breconshire without saying or hearing something about him, and this is a distinguishing characteristic of nearly all parts of Wales. There is some luminous overshadowing local personality that the very 'ploughboys in the fields, after 800 years, vaguely recognise, and every man of ordinary education knows as little or as much of as an average Englishman knows of William the Conqueror. The region is saturated with that particular name, or at least that particular family. Nearly every ruined Castle or Abbey or Town Charter dates back to the great man or his immediate descendants: Strongbow in Pembroke, the Greys in Denbigh, the Clares in Glamorgan, Newmarch and de Braose in Brecon and Radnor, the Mortimers in Gwent. Then the later conquered regions yet breathe of their native princes—in more affectionate fashion, it is true—but still the personal note in the atmosphere is the same. There is nothing like this in England short of the Scottish Marches. The Norman Conquest hangs

like a dreary pall, enveloping the whole country, and in the ordinary mortal's mind quite devoid of local name or luminous incident. Only a student here and there could link his Wiltshire or his Hampshire or his Suffolk with any ruling race or personality connected with that period. No names, at any rate, are written over their face, or familiar in men's minds, and for obvious reasons. But in Wales and the Marches, the story is plain for every one to read. These men who carved out kingdoms and made laws, and built great buildings, and fought scores of bloody fights, and founded long-enduring families, as well as the others who struggled against them, are household words. They give zest and colour to Welsh topography, and even a glamour to its landscape not quite easy of description to those unacquainted with the country, or at any rate with a point of view that cursory visitors do not often acquire. Fancy any part of Wales having to fall back on recent fiction to vitalise its landscape!

Like Fitzhamon in Glamorgan, Bernard apportioned his territory into fifteen manors, and bestowed them upon the knights who had helped him to win them—Awbreys, Gunters, Walbeoffs, Havards, Bullens, and others whose names have lasted till quite recent times in Brecon, and of whose blood there is yet plenty. He next moved the capital of the district from Gaer to its present site, even taking some of the material to build his new castle at Brecon. When this was finished he founded his church, and around this nucleus there grew up one of the oldest and most important towns of South Wales, and quite the most beautifully situated, which is saying a great deal. To strengthen his interest with the Welsh, who tilled or grazed the lands of the fifteen manors in sullen mood, he married another of the many Nests, celebrated in Welsh story, a granddaughter of Griffith ap Llewelyn, Prince of North Wales, who, however, turned out anything but a success, and proved to be a lady quite devoid of principles.

It is an easy and pleasant eight miles by a fine road down

the upper-vale of Usk to Brecon town. The classic stream so famous in song and story, strenuous and clear but finely tinged with the amber dye of the Carmarthen mountain peat-bogs, frets and foams over the red rocks that form its channel, between pleasant fields and park lands. Away to the north, beyond the belt, where old abiding places of long potent families have tamed the landscape with lush ox-pastures, and decked it with timber now grown old and stately, the country spreads upward and away into bleaker regions and the small highland farms soon fade away into the Epynt hills. To the south we see little of the Black Mountains, which like a mighty wall shut out Glamorganshire and her furnace fires for the rich valley foot hills which hem us in.

Two or three miles down the river, though it would be rash to attempt precision, the Welsh language, which has flourished all around us so far, fades into English, and as I have mentioned before, English will travel faster up a valley than along the hills above, while the ability to speak both languages fairly well is more common than usual, I think, in this quarter of Breconshire.

This old road, or what passed for a road before the coaching period, has seen many a representative group move up and down it in the last fifteen hundred years or so, and many a warlike throng, intent on the blood of others, or running to save their own. For short of the sea-coast this was the main entrance to south-west Wales. Here probably rather than down the Irfon passed the eight loads of honey carried on poles, two men to a pole, which we are told constituted the modest tribute exacted by one or two of the more successful Saxon kings from Ystrad Towy, and it was perhaps as well that they contented themselves with this modest demand. It was up here that Lord Whittney rode to meet at Trecastle that audacious grandfather of Sir Rhys ap Thomas who played him such a cruel trick at Carmarthen. Along here, too, in much splendour rode the Duke of Beaufort and his chronicler, Mr.

Dinely, and all the gentry of Breconshire on that picturesque expedition we have already spoken of. The country seats of Abercamlais and Penpont lie near by and close together between road and river; both owned and lived in by the ancient and in this case the same stock. And at Penpont, whose splendid timber does not hide from view a pile of fine old brown and grey outbuildings stretching away from the back of a seventeenth century manor-house on the river bank, the Duke's company on that same immortal progress halted for dinner, the menu of which is duly chronicled by the faithful Dinely. A short way beyond and close to the road lies Aberbrân, a striking old Tudor farmhouse, and particularly suggestive to Breconians as one of the chief strongholds of the Games, a notable family, of whom more anon.

A mile below, and across the Usk which, gathering force from tributary streams, grows louder between its leafy banks, is situated what is known simply as "The Gaer." I have not loitered hitherto at places of Roman or of pre-historic interest. To be ardent about most of these old grass-grown places of defiance or defence, it is almost necessary to be possessed of much technical knowledge of the subject. But the Brecon Gaer, which indeed was the capital of Brycheiniog, if the head-quarters of its reguli may admit of so fine a name, till Bernard de Newmarch built the present town three miles away, is something altogether more tangible. For much of the massive wall of squared and mortared stone surmounting the fosse which enclosed the camp, still in many places six feet high, remains, while the camp itself is a fine parallelogram of level meadow on a raised plateau of some eight acres in extent. Upon the sward within, too, the traces of Roman buildings are plain enough, as is the causeway leading to them, which is a branch of the via Julia. Farm buildings have been freely erected out of the stone from the great wall, and it has been already told how much material the ancient buildings contributed to the founding of Brecon. A century ago the whole area was littered with frag-

ments of brick and numerous relics of the Roman period which have been unearthed at various times. A stone called "Maen y Morwynion," the "stone of the maidens," stands on the Roman road to Brecon. On it is carved the figure of a Roman citizen and his wife, with their arms over each other's shoulders and the inscription "Alancina civis et conjux ejus h.s.est." There is no doubt but that this was a British Roman station of the first importance, connected with Caerleon and the great stations of North and West Wales by those well-known arteries whose stony surfaces one may so often track on barren mountains or along leafy lanes. It stands in the angle formed by the junction of the Yskir and the Usk. And while on the subject there is another smaller but much more boldly situated station, though of British origin, known as the Crûg, a mile or so off, overlooking Brecon; a particular favourite of archæologists as well as of the public generally, for the view from it is one of the loveliest in South Wales.

The old church of Llanspyddyd standing by the roadside would arrest one's steps, if only for the immense yew trees that shade its picturesque graveyard, but there is also a stone here which is supposed to commemorate the mighty Brychan himself. And talking of Brychan, it might be well to remind the alien who in Wales finds himself at every step confronting saints of whom he never before heard that the Welsh saint was a peculiar production. There would seem to have been two distinct varieties, the missioner from over sea and the native specimen. The former was, presumably a single-minded and devout person, but the native may have only been a saint because his father was, and when he and a dozen saintly brothers, by various mothers, with no marriage lines to speak of, have only their heredity to base their claims upon, these last would not seem to modern notions very convincing. Even when the conclusions of the learned upon this subject have been summed up, it is not quite easy to distinguish the warrior and the land grabber from the saint. There were

great tribes of the latter, and the proverbial bread and water does not seem to have been precisely their standard of life. The three chief among these saints, Cunedda, Caw and Brychan—of the period following the Roman evacuation—were colonising warriors not widely differing from Bernard de Newmarch and William the Conqueror, who in turn displaced them, but they begat saints literally by the score and were not content with monopolising by conquest the fat lands of nearly all Wales, but apparently reserved the very piety of the country as a close corporation. As one learned authority on the subject puts it:—"The son of a saint was not necessarily a saint, but to attain this honour it was necessary to be of a saintly father."

As the good town of Brecon comes into view, rising finely above the left bank of the river, a capacious farmhouse standing back from the road among the meadows would from its striking appearance give pause to the most careless traveller. We were pulled up in somewhat similar fashion higher up the valley at Aberbrân. Here, however, is a much more remarkable building, and oddly enough derives additional interest from the same ownership as the other, namely, that of the Games. Newton is a great deal more than a farmhouse in size and stature. One may be thankful it has fallen socially, otherwise it would no doubt have been modernised out of recognition. As it is, the artist's pencil will be a far more efficient delineator than my pen of this beautiful old house, built at a time when taste and comfort were still struggling with the lingering fear of possible foes. The inside is still as suggestive as the outside and the work of a dairy farm goes on amid many eloquent reminders of the domestic life of an extinct race, who for generations were one of the most powerful native families of Wales.

Over the fireplace in the great hall are their arms, and a notification in Welsh that John, the son and heir of Sir Edward Games, built the house in 1582. "Ar Dduw y gyd," "On God all depends." One might moralise here with much effect, on the number of great families in Britain who were never ennobled,

but played a part and exercised a power far greater than most nobles, and whose names are not even mentioned in the most voluminous histories of England ; whose descendants, unless in the eyes of a few local genealogists, might just as well bear the useful name of Robinson, so far as the world knows or cares. I suppose the very strength of the British social fabric lies in its short memory ; its inconstancies ; its compromises ; its professed recognition of blood, its practical indifference to it. The system surely works well and makes for stability. The fourth generation from the successful tradesman will sniff at the second from the point of view of heredity alone ; but a pedigree from Ednyfed Vychan or Elystan Godrydd unsupported by anything substantial in money or present connection would be so much waste paper in the eyes of either or of anybody—a wholesome condition of things perhaps, vulgar and practical, if a trifle ludicrous, in a society that still hugs with its tongue in its cheek the amazing fiction of an aristocracy of blood. Still the joke goes merrily on that the tradesman is an interloper into a sacred caste. In the meantime a few thousand genuine Vere de Veres of the third or fourth generation, from a younger son or a lost estate, count for just as much or just as little as the Jack Robinsons in the various localities where they live on half-pay or practice law or heal the sick. These reflections are unprofitable, but they will rise to the mind amid the graveyards and ill-kept monuments of country churches in England or Wales. Even the Welsh love of genealogy is at bottom mainly academic, though the private estimate of the peasantry of their superiors is more influenced by ancient blood no doubt, and still worries the politician. The Welsh are fond of discussing genealogy, but as a question rather of local and historic interest, and in a fashion more free from the personal note than in Ireland or America, in both of which countries inaccuracy is so blatant, and imposture so rampant.

I do not think there are any Games left, so I may venture the affirmation that a bearer of that once potent name would

not attach to himself a single spark of interest or derive the faintest glimmer of social satisfaction from the possession. Yet it is said that there is scarcely a single estate in the whole of Breconshire that at one time or another did not belong to this once powerful race. For three centuries no movement would have been complete without them, and indeed they usually took the foremost lead. They are said to have had their origin in Caradoc, a knight of King Arthur's Round Table; but the first we hear much of is the celebrated Davy Gam or the squint-eyed, for this one like many other Welsh families derived its name from the physical peculiarities of an ancestor. Davy Gam or Dafydd ap Llewelyn had inherited property above Brecon, but got into trouble for slaying a neighbouring squire in the streets of the town, and took service with Henry of Bolingbroke before he seized the throne, and lived in his household. When later on Glyndwr rose against Henry, Davy took the king's side, and when the Welsh chieftain called a parliament to Machynlleth he went there under pretence of being a convert to the popular cause, but with the real intention of killing its leader. His machinations, however, were discovered, and he only escaped instant death by the intercessions of his numerous friends and relatives. Glyndwr kept him locked up for many years and burnt his house the first time he went to Brecon, and it was not till near the end of the war that he regained his liberty. On this Davy followed his old master's son, Henry V., to the French Wars, and died gloriously on the field of Agincourt, not, however, before he had received knighthood at the hands of the king, whose life he is said to have saved. He is supposed to have been the original of Shakespeare's "Fluellen," and either he or another Breconshire gentleman, his son-in-law, Vaughan of Tretower, were the authors of the well known reply to Henry when questioned as to the numbers of the French that "there were enough to kill, enough to take prisoners, and enough to run away."

The Brecon Beacons are now lifting their green slopes, and

their peaks, and precipices of red sandstone to the height of Cader Idris or Skiddaw, and with most beautiful effect immediately above us. And the mention of Skiddaw suggests the query whether there is any other considerable town but Keswick quite so gloriously situated as is Brecon, in all this island! An old stone bridge of many arches lands you at the foot of the steep streets, that lead up to the ridge where the main part of the town chiefly stands. The tower of Bernard de Newmarch's castle springs out of a wall of foliage high above the river. From a ravine between town and castle, the waters of the Honddu come tumbling down into the Usk just above the bridge, the united streams pouring under its six or seven arches, and hurrying down a broad and sparkling reach, and giving the dawdlers in the buttress angles a fine vista of meadow, wood, and stream. Who indeed would not dawdle on a bridge if they had the chance, when it is a river like the Usk that rushes under it? I am sure a bridge like that of Brecon, or of Builth, of Llangollen, or Llanrwst, or a score of others I could mention in Wales, must conduce to idleness, and might even affect the local labour market. But you must haunt a bridge yourself for a time; a bridge of the right sort, I mean, one of character, with stir and life beneath it, to understand the fascination. Is that two-pounder in his accustomed haunt in the tiny eddy under the third buttress? Five or six inches of water have come down in the night, and with the slightly agitated surface it will take five people as many minutes before they are quite certain that they can see him. Then look at the olive duns which the samlets are flicking at so freely under the centre arch; what a temptation it is to man or boy to hang on the parapet, and watch the insects sailing on their precarious journey, and going under one by one. Then, again, there is the great pool that palpitates just below most bridges of the proper kind. And you may always speculate how many salmon are waiting in it for the next flood to carry them further. And these, after all,

are but some of the material and tangible excitements of the bridge-haunter. You must allow him all sorts of dreams and fancies induced by the stir and movement and melody of the stream, be he ever so rude a swain, and make allowance for him.

The late Mr. Poole in his history of Breconshire expresses some humorous satisfaction that the most indefatigable antiquaries have been unable to upset the date of the founding of the county town. Those Roman coins and fragments of pottery do make such a formidable beginning to many a place which you would like to introduce to the reader in somewhat brighter fashion and solicit his interest in its story by a more promising opening. Yet these spear heads and kitchen utensils will weigh to a certainty on your conscience if you wholly ignore them. But there is no doubt whatever that Bernard de Newmarch struck virgin soil at Brecon. I told enough of his story, I think, when we entered the county at Hay, in the second chapter, for the simple reason that we could not have gone along without him, and related how the de Braoses inherited his honours and the de Bohuns, Earls of Hereford, succeeded them in due course. But I do not think I mentioned why the Newmarch's blood lapsed on the male side so promptly, for Bernard had a son named Mahael, who was badly used, and the first Norman dynasty of Brecon opened with a disturbing incident. Bernard, it will be remembered, married Nest, daughter of the reigning prince of North Wales, and, as before hinted, she was no better than she should be. The gentleman involved was one of Bernard's knights, and was encountered by his overlord in single combat and wounded. Out of sheer spite, apparently, Nest added the crime of unnatural perjury to her infidelity, for she swore to the king that her son Mahael was not Bernard's and thereby caused the lordship to lapse, through the daughter, to Milo Fitzwalter, whence it fell again through a daughter to the de Braoses, already Lords of Builth, which was not included in the original conquest. The de

Braoses did not lack heirs, but they lacked many of the virtues, as was indicated when we rode by the Upper Wye. Every Welshman knows the gruesome story of Llewelyn the Great and William de Braose. How the latter while a prisoner in Llewelyn's place at Aber, or, as some say, at Crogen, was detected in an intrigue with Llewelyn's wife: how the prince did not suspect it till the Norman had gone home again, and how he then in friendly fashion invited him to spend Easter and after feasting him well, hanged him on a neighbouring tree. It is only when one actually gets to Brecon, and has to be particular about the de Braose genealogy, one realises that the lady in question was grandmother-in-law to her too rash admirer!

This however is all deplorably ancient history, and scandalous too. Let us look rather at the Brecon of to-day, a clean, wholesome, reasonably old-fashioned looking town of six thousand inhabitants. But these modern figures, as in the case of Carmarthen, are no sort of measure of its importance, past or present. It has been something more than the very heart and centre of a prosperous and beautiful county. It is no longer as in former times on the highway to the west, and under modern conditions even the best country towns must suffer in dignity. But Brecon is something more even yet than a centre for quarter sessions and cattle markets. It is the depôt, for one thing, of that distinguished regiment, the S. W. Borderers, the old 24th, and the memory of Isandhlwana will not be effaced even by the blood that has been since shed on the same soil. It boasts, moreover, of Christ's College, the rival school to Llandovery, a good deal larger and a great deal older than the latter. Indeed, it is a Tudor foundation, blossomed of late into a minor public school and commodiously housed in a beautiful situation on the further bank of the Usk. Lastly, Brecon has a most noble church, grandly placed among ancient tombs upon a plateau looking down upon castle, town, and river.

"Did Brecon," wrote that great authority, Mr. E. A. Freeman, "possess only this one magnificent object, it would be enough to give it a high architectural place among towns of its own class." But even putting this aside, the historian considered Brecon as ranking high among county towns on archæological grounds alone. The Priory Church is regarded as second only to St. David's, about on a par with Llandaff, and distinctly superior to the two northern Cathedrals. It is cruciform in structure, of the early pointed style with a squat but massive embattled tower rising from the centre, and is accounted as quite perfect in its severe but beautifully proportioned simplicity of style. Its elevated position amid a spacious and well kept graveyard, its venerable trees, and the ancient buildings of the adjoining Priory, make up a picture of which resident Breconians may well be proud, and absent ones recall with fond memory. Shady walks lead down on one side to the clear rapids of the Honddu: on the other, though further off, the broad Usk gleams in the valley, while beyond the latter mountains as sharp in outline, and as high as those of famed Merioneth, climb the sky. But scarcely any tourists, I am told, come to Brecon. Yet when I recall the Ardennes, for instance, both in the reality and amid the amazing illustrations that decorate every big railway station in England, and then look out across the Vale of Usk to the pointed peaks and ruddy cliffs of Cribyn and Penyfan, I do not think it is insular prejudice that makes me marvel; for are there not plenty of regions this side of the Channel that could compare even with the Ardennes, or the Black Forest, which find increasing favour among enlightened tourists?

Something of the same despair takes hold of me at the great door of Brecon church as I felt at St. David's. I shall neglect the architectural details, and get entangled among the records of the dead, of which there are an enormous number in this stately mausoleum of Breconian worth and distinction. The nave was in olden days used as the parish church, while the choir

and transepts were reserved by the Priory. The former is considered to be of fourteenth century date, a rebuilding of the first Norman structure, while the transepts are earlier, and in the thirteenth century Gothic style. The finest portion of the church, however, is the choir, which is thirteenth century, and notable for its triplets of lancet windows on either side, and its east window of the same design. A good deal of restoration work was done about thirty years ago by Sir Gilbert Scott. There are several chapels full of tombs, one of them known as "the Chapel of the men of Battle," Battle being a small parish near by; another as Capel y Cochiad, or the Chapel of the red-haired men (the Normans).

Among the mass of stone and marble commemorating the dead in this noble minster we must not linger. But in the nave, the sole relic of the mausoleum of the Games of Aberbrân, despoiled by Cromwellian soldiers, is a wonderful wooden figure of a lady of that ancient family, elaborately dressed in the costume of Elizabeth. The Games' monuments were intact in Churchyard's time, and inspired that worthy poet to the extent of a stanza:

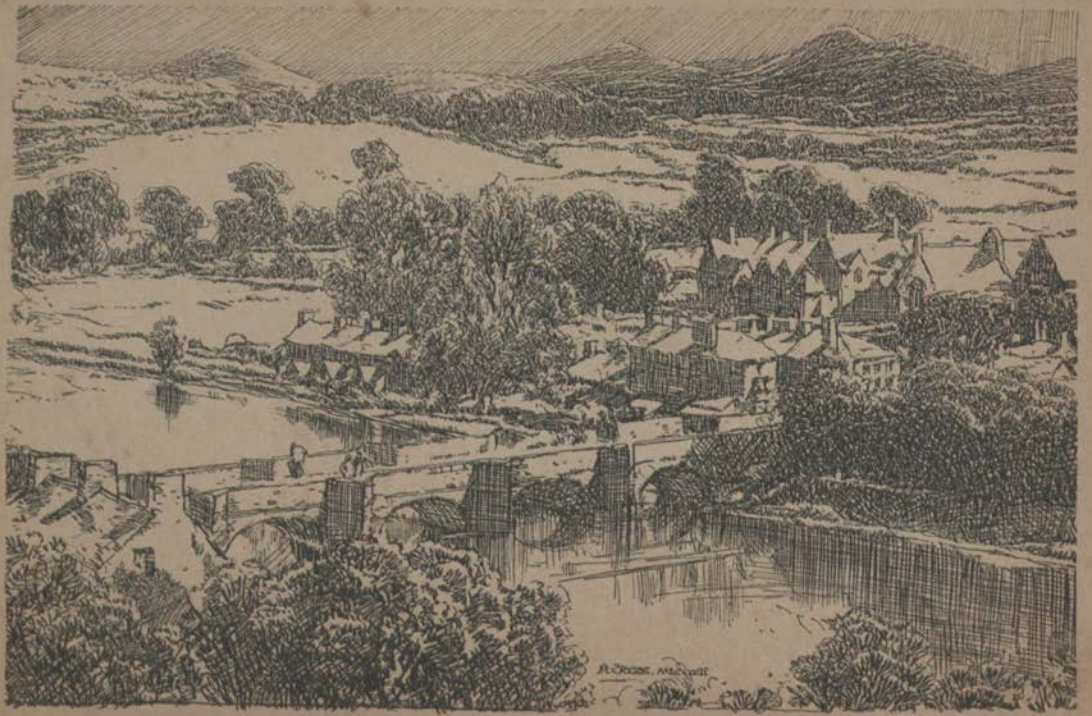
> "These are indeed the ancient race of Games,
> A house and blood that long rich armes must give,
> And now in Wales are many of their names,
> That keepe great trayne and doth full bravely live."

As one passes out of the gate, by the old tithe barn of the Priory, and gets a glimpse of the present house, one must not forget that here lived Sir John Price, who promoted and drafted that notable petition to Henry VIII., which resulted in the abolition of the Marches, and the union of England and Wales. Here, too, King Charles stopped for a night, on his hurried march through Wales. As one descends the street by the bridled torrents of the Honddu, there is a most wonderful peep of the beacons; their peaks seeming to hang in mid-air above a pile of old gabled roofs. The tower of the castle too, should by all means be ascended, though the

advantage to be gained thereby is of a scenic rather than an archæological nature: for the outlook over the roofs of the town, to the broad and shining Usk spanned by its old bridge with the richly wooded slopes beyond, leading gradually up to the highest summits of the Black Mountains, is not easily surpassed even in Wales. It is said that a conference held here between Morton, Bishop of Ely, a prisoner in the castle, and the Duke of Buckingham, its then owner, resulted in the original overtures to Henry VII., which afterwards brought forth such fruit.

The remains of the castle stand in the grounds of one of the most notable old County Town Hostelries in South Wales, which has also the advantage of a delightful situation entirely removed from the clatter of the town. The tourist in South Wales has often cause of complaint that he has nowhere to lay his head, or at any rate no refuge of a tempting kind, but in Brecon he may make himself happy in a good many different quarters. Fishermen have been coming here for all time, as the Upper Usk is one of the best trout rivers in Wales, probably only surpassed by the remoter Teify. It is the first salmon river in England or Wales, or was so till quite recently, when conditions arose which make its owners and frequenters melancholy or irate according to their temperament, but do not concern the reader. Let us hope these abuses will be rectified in due course, and that good times may return again for the Usk fisherman.

There is another church in Brecon, too, no mean one, St. Mary's, were it not so hopelessly overshadowed; and there are some charming old houses of Tudor origin, in a quiet retreat above the river, still kept up and inhabited by gentlefolks. The most interesting is that of Dr. Awbrey, who held many high offices in Elizabeth's reign. It is now worthily occupied by a lady of much knowledge in all that concerns Breconian lore past and present, and to whom I am greatly indebted in these pages.



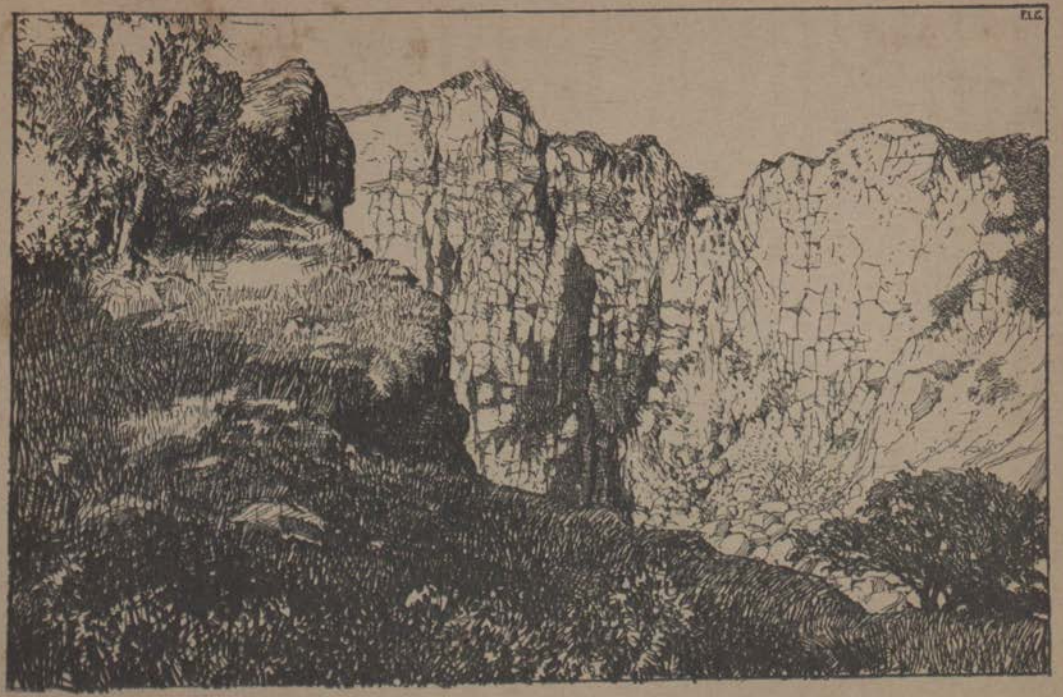
Brecon Bridge.

Mrs. Siddons was born in Brecon and so was Charles Kemble, the actor, her youngest brother. Some French officers too in the Napoleon wars remained for some years here as prisoners on parole, and the "Captains' Walk" by the river still recalls the fact. The reader will perhaps be glad to hear that there is nothing much to be said about Brecon, the Welsh name for which by the way is Aberhonddu, in connection with the Civil War. The Brecknock squires seem to have pulled through these troublous times with considerable circumspection. When their loyalist sympathies began to threaten them with serious trouble, and the cause seemed hopeless, they took the easy terms then available; and, to make sure that the castle should be no temptation to either side, and become a cause of strife, the townsmen dismantled it with their own hands. Charles I., as I have said, came here on his rapid progress through South Wales and spent a day or two at the Priory, there inditing a letter to his son which struck the first note of despair on the king's part that we have any record of.

The buildings of Christ's College, which stand picturesquely in pleasant grounds across the Usk, would not detain us, but for the ancient collegiate chapel which belongs to its foundation. Here several bishops of St. David's of the sixteenth century were buried, and within it are some interesting effigies, some of Shakespeare's Lucys among others, for a younger son of the house of Charlecote held the see of St. David's, and founded a family who intermarried with Breconshire magnates. One of the most injudicious divines that ever held the great South Welsh see, Bishop Mainwaring, lies here also beneath a tablet on the floor. This prelate carried his loyalty to Charles I and his interpretation of Divine right doctrines to the verge of blasphemy, and shocked even his friends. Charles of course, with that fatuous gift of his for doing the wrong thing, promoted the sycophantic Mediocrity to honours that he was hurled from the more violently when the protecting hand of his royal patron was withdrawn.

No active individual could possibly remain long in Brecon without being seized with a desire to ascend the Beacons. The Black Mountain range fills the entire background across the Usk Valley, extending to the verge of sight both upon the east and upon the west. But these two peaks, Pen-y-fan and Corn-du, the highest of all, rise immediately opposite Brecon with a dignity and beauty of form and colouring that must make most other places seem tiresome to live in for exiled Breconians of taste and feeling. Near as they look, however, from some points in the town, and in some atmospheric conditions almost as though they might fall and crush it, it is a good step of some three or four miles, for the aspiring climber who would tramp, even by the shortest path, to their feet.

But the best way to make the most of the country, enjoy the day, and mount the Beacons, is to cycle up the Merthyr road which climbs the highest pass that is crossed by a first-class road in all Wales. The ascent is gradual and easily rideable, and at a point nine miles off, and an elevation of nearly fourteen hundred feet, a lonely inn, known as the "Storey Arms," looks down over a wild country towards Glamorganshire. The road leaves the Vale of Usk by way of a tributary stream, the Tarrell, and follows it up to its source among the bogs. After five miles of the lush hedge-rows, the green pastures and red fallows of the southern slope of the vale, the winding road cut into the edge of the mountain, grows gradually wilder, and the glen beneath by degrees sheds its draperies and takes on the roughness of the moorland, and the stream tumbles more furiously amid rocks and ferns, and heather and birch trees far below. The mountains now close in with the Beacons themselves on the left and the slopes of Fan Frynach on the right, while fences and farms dwindle away into the open wild. The wonderful precipice of Craig Cerrig Gleisiad, too, with its sheer walls of naked rock some five hundred feet in height, within a



Craig Cerrig Gleisiad.

stone's throw of the road, strikes a fine note amid the solitude. The noisy Tarrell falls to a trickle, and from a trickle into silence till the summit of the pass is breasted, and a few hundred yards beyond is an inn whose isolation might suggest untold situations for sensational fiction. It is not an attractive looking tavern, and is given over, I should imagine, more to the thirsty son of toil on his way to the murky regions of Merthyr and the south than to the mountaineer, but is perhaps sufficient for the occasion.

We are now at the back of the Beacons, and the ascent from this side is a long, up-hill drag rather than a climb. A somewhat interesting condition of things rewarded my ascent of these two summits in the past autumn. I had crossed the Vale of Usk in the bright sunlight of a cloudless morning. The mountain slopes were greener even than usual from recent rains, the ruddy precipices of Cribyn and Pen-y-fan were quite fiery in the sun's rays. I had almost reached the "Storey Arms" when the scene suddenly changed so far as these higher latitudes were concerned, and the heavens descended, though happily the floods did not come. Whirling clouds, however, came racing up before a strong breeze from the south-west and the sea. One moment you might see half a mile and the next not fifty yards: all was mist and gloom. The sunshine of half-an-hour ago, as is the case on such occasions, seemed like a dream: the chances of beholding it again remote.

Now the Peak of Pen-y-fan is about sixteen hundred feet above the inn—and out of sight in any weather. There is no beaten track, and the route is quite vague, though the points to make for can be readily indicated to a stranger in clear weather. On this occasion, however, these friendly landmarks were invisible, and there was no guide to be had. The inn was full of festive miners, and quite uninviting. An ignominious return thus early in the day was not to be thought of, and there is much fascination in a mountain top even in a mist when you

are once up there and the clouds whirling madly round, as they were to-day. Then again the chances of clearing weather are in reality so much greater than they seem to be when actually in the clouds.

As a stranger to the ground, my course to the top of Corndu, which comes first, was circuitous and lengthy, but all the precipices worth mentioning I knew to be on the Brecon side of the summits. It was merely a question of time, which happened to be of no value whatever. When I had groped my way up, however, over the rough moor grasses and spongy bogs to the foot of the crags that crown the summit of Corndu, and scrambled up them, the horizon had contracted to a radius of from five to twenty yards, though the wind was blowing at such a rate I was glad enough to find shelter in the crannies of the rocks. That further progress would have been rash without a knowledge of the ground I was well aware, from some familiarity with the shape of the mountains as seen from below, and purposeless in any case. Reward came, however, on this occasion sooner than looked for. For perhaps half an hour I had contemplated the endless rush of flaky vapour, sometimes tantalising one with a momentary glimpse of green below, and then again mixing with the very smoke of one's pipe. A hawk dashed by anon and now and again a crow sailing up with the wind vanished into the mist over the precipice that I rightly conjectured lay ahead of us. A rock ousel, bred no doubt in these same crags, blundered into my immediate presence to the astonishment and terror of that shy haunter of wild places, but a wheatear, having surveyed me calmly and critically, proved sociable, and chirped around as if the occasion was quite a cheerful and conventional one. Gradually the clouds lightened and lifted: the Peak of Pen-y-fan, or Arthur's chair, showed but a few hundred yards off and two or three hundred feet higher, and I lost no time in getting on to the top of the highest point in South Wales.

The outlook to the south and west had now opened to the horizon. There was not a ray of sunshine visible in the sky, but a bit of the sea flashed somewhere on the far verge of sight, while immediately below us was an amphitheatre formed by the ridges of our own range running southward in long ramparts of red and naked rock. In a wild hollow in the lap of the mountain the little tarn of Llyn-cwm-llwch slumbered peacefully. Away down the valley, the waters of a reservoir showed like a sheet of steel between the sunless fields and woods. But it was in the far distance that the effect on this occasion was finest. A dozen to twenty miles away, whither nearly as many gorges could be seen trending southwards and bearing the waters of the Black Mountains towards Glamorgan and the Bristol Channel, the smoke wreaths of Merthyr, of Aberdare, of the Rhondda Valley, of Dowlais and the Vale of Neath were mingling with the banks of vapour that came rolling from the sea. It was not easy to distinguish the white cloud of the furnace fires from the grey cloud of the Atlantic, and they seemed at this distance to struggle together for a moment above the lower mountain tops, when they first met, and then to come hurtling towards us in mingled volume before the wind. Looking westward again and along the dusky edges of the Black Mountains[1] the clouds had lifted, but hovered above the long array of shoulders and summits in that lowering fashion which makes a wild country look so infinitely wilder. Fan-frynach and Fan-Giherich, Fan-Brycheiniog and Fan-hir, rolling away one behind the other, a confusion of dark and rugged masses into Carmarthenshire (though none of them three thousand feet in altitude), made as savage and striking a picture as one could wish for. To the

[1] Strictly speaking the term *Black Mountains* is only applicable to the eastern end of this range, but throughout this book, for the sake of convenience, I have availed myself of a common usage of speech which includes it all.

north, the Vale of Usk, from Trecastle to Crickhowel, lay like a map beneath me, as I stood at the edge of the red sandstone precipice which drops from the crest of the mountain. But the sunlight was sorely needed for so fair a scene. The murky clouds that gave mystery and stature to the dark ridges of Glamorgan and further weirdness and distinction to the Carmarthen Vans did not sit well upon the meadows, woods, and villages by the banks of Usk. Nor could anything be seen that day beyond the billowy outline of the Epynts, which form the northern rampart of the Vale.

CHAPTER XIII

" But Isca, whenso'e'er those shades I see,
And thy loved arbours must no more know me,
When I am laid to rest hard by thy streams,
And my sun sets where first it sprang in beams,
I'll leave behind me such a large, clear light,
As shall redeem thee from oblivious night,
And in these vows, which living yet I pay,
Shed such a pervious and enduring ray
As shall from age to age thy fair name lead,
Till rivers leave to run and men to read."

HENRY VAUGHAN, known in literature as "Silurist," was a Breconshire man to the backbone, as may be gathered from this fragment of one of his best known poems. Some five miles down the valley, on this the last stage of our journey, we shall pass near the site where stood his old home of Newton, pulled down somewhat ruthlessly within living memory. Henry Vaughan was not a village bard. He was a poet of no mean order, whose admirers have been among the cultured and the few. His verse was of the contemplative and mainly religious kind, like that of George Herbert, his countryman and contemporary. Like Herbert, too, he was of illustrious race, being a Vaughan of Tretower near Crickhowel, and on the female side descended from the Somersets. Born in 1621, he inherited his father's modest property at Newton, was educated at Jesus College, Oxford, studied law subsequently in London,

and medicine we know not where. He seems to have practised the latter when he returned home, but was virtually a retiring and scholarly country gentleman. The poet had a twin and only brother who took up arms for the king in the Civil War, and he himself, whether an actual combatant or not, certainly suffered imprisonment for his ardent partisanship. He lived at Newton till he died, at the age of 73: yet nearly everything he wrote, which was a good deal, not merely of original verse but of translations from the classics, was published before he was half that age. Vaughan does not seem to have been appreciated in his time. The Civil War period was hardly an encouraging one to the singer of reflective and spiritual verse, however beautiful. Neither Cavalier nor Cromwellian was probably much in the mood for it. The Welsh, who in more modern days, have crowned many minor bards, seem to have overlooked one of whom they might well make much, and left the great English poets to do his memory justice. Wordsworth, Longfellow, and Matthew Arnold, amongst others, have all paid their tribute. Indeed there is room for, supposing that Vaughan's poem *The Retreat* had some inspiring influence on Wordsworth's famous *Intimations of Immortality*. It is beyond a doubt most strangely suggestive, though too long to quote here, while a brief extract hardly justifies the theory. But there are signs that Henry Vaughan will yet receive some measure of tardy justice. As I am writing this a new edition of his poems is under the zealous supervision of a well-known lady in Brecon and a collaborator in New England, where the Swan of Usk has been more appreciated than in his own country. Vaughan seems to have had frail health all his life, a condition which, no doubt, conduced to his imaginative and reflective temperament and retiring habit. His lines to his Departed Friends, written about the close of the Civil War, when many of those invoked, no doubt, had fallen in battle, seem sombre for a man who had yet forty years to live!

"They are all gone into the world of light,
And I alone sit lingering here.
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

. . . . . .

"Dear, beauteous death, the jewel of the just,
Shining nowhere but in the dark,
What mysteries lie beyond thy dust,
Could man o'erlook that mark!

"And yet as angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
And into glory peep."

He was buried in Llansantfread churchyard, and the Usk he loved so well, and which is indeed worthy of a poet's love, makes melody within sound of his resting place. The stone which records the fact of his interment here, carries this further inscription—"Quod in sepulcrum voluit, Servus inutilis, Peccator maximus hic Jaceo—Gloria miserere."

Below Brecon to the eastward the Usk valley opens wider. It has in fact for the next stage only one clearly defined wall, to wit, the continuation of the Beacon group of the Black Mountains, which magnificently overhang the southern bank. On the north, however, the Epynt range, whose lower slopes and foothills compressed the vale into more trough-like shape above Brecon, below it shrink away towards their backbone, of which we saw so much, in an earlier chapter, overhanging the parallel valley of the Irfon. There is quite a wide strip therefore of fair and undulating and well peopled pastoral country, running eastward for eight miles, with the Usk and the Black Mountains dominating it on the south, till it is terminated by these same mountains turning northward and leaping across to the Wye Valley. Here, near Llansantfraed, Vaughan's burial place, and Talybont Station, the Usk has to struggle through a gap in the mountains into the beautiful vale of Crickhowel, while the road thither climbs a lofty pass known as the Bwlch.

Other roads from Brecon seek egress round this big block of mountains which lies so direct across the path to England, by Talgarth and the Three Cocks. The railroad at Talyllyn Junction below Brecon parts, still more widely, flinching from any further connection with the Vale of Usk, and hurrying off due south through the mountains to Merthyr Tydvil and due north over the here almost imperceptible watershed of the Wye Valley.

In this beautiful basin, with its abounding rural life, the pulse of Breconshire beats, and always did beat, its strongest. Native princes and Lord Marchers alike must have held it as their inner sanctuary, the jewel of their crown. The wrecks of small castles crumble upon its edges, and a belt of greater ones lie just beyond. Country houses, of storied associations, stand thick enough, and old names yet flourish in many of them. Long an English-speaking district, it is still as Welsh as a region that is fertile, accessible, and has forgotten its native tongue can very well be. The moment you are out of it though, either by way of the gap at Talgarth to the Wye or down at the other corner over the Bwlch to the Usk again, the atmosphere is in all respects distinctly more English, Brecon though they both be. There are many roads, mostly good ones, by which you may investigate this delectable country. If you leave the town by the Hay road, for instance, nine miles will bring you to Talgarth. Thence turning southward along the base of the mountains another stage of similar length by Llangorse Lake will carry you to the Usk, just where it runs out of this Brecon district below the Bwlch at Talybont. Turning west again, a further ride of eight or nine miles up the Usk valley to Brecon will complete three sides of something like an equilateral triangle, and enclose a great deal of charming and interesting country, which loses nothing in having for its constant, ever-varying background such noble hills as dominate it. Just off the Glasbury and Hay road again, about two miles from Brecon, is Llanthew (Llanddewi), the most interesting church, next to the

Talyllyn Village and Pen Cader Range.

Priory, in the county. In the precincts stood an old residence of the Bishops of St. David's, and what to many people is of still greater interest, the foundations of the mansion in which Giraldus Cambrensis lived when Archdeacon of Brecon may yet be traced. "In these temperate regions," he writes, "I have obtained a place of dignity, but no great omen of future pomp or riches, and possessing a small residence near the Castle of Brycheiniog, well adapted to literary pursuits and the contemplation of Eternity, I envy not the riches of Croesus, happy and contented with that mediocrity which I prize far beyond all the perishable and transitory things of this world." This contented and unambitious mood does not altogether harmonise with those dreams of the mitre of St. David's, and the restoration of its Archiepiscopate in his person, so ardently cherished by the Archdeacon of Brecon. Indeed he was actually nominated by the canons to the vacant see, but the king, fearing so pronounced and strong a person, cancelled the election and sent down a tool of his own. No slights, however, could diminish the Archdeacon's devotion to the greatest Welsh see, and when occasion arose he sprang to its defence. Indeed while residing at this very palace of his near Brecon he made himself the hero of a really stirring effort on its behalf.

Now it so happened that on a certain occasion Giraldus had just returned to Llanthew, much fatigued after a long excursion through his Archdeaconry, when two clergymen arrived in hot haste with most disquieting news. They had come from Kerry, on the southern edge of what is now Montgomeryshire, then in the district of Elvael, and apparently within the diocese of St. David's. But the Bishop of St. Asaph thought otherwise, and had sent an almost defiant message to say that he was coming immediately to dedicate a new church there. The clergy of Kerry were indignant and alarmed, having no mind to be thus violently transferred to the northern diocese, and besought the Archdeacon to come without delay if he would prevent this unwarrantable annexation. Giraldus, exhausted

though he was, required no pressing to such congenial work. But first he despatched messengers to Einion and Cadwallon, two relations of his own and chieftains of Elvael, requesting them to send men and arms to Kerry church on the appointed day for his assistance in vindicating, by force if necessary, the rights of St. David's. It was rumoured that his lordship of St. Asaph was to be accompanied by warriors from the north, and altogether the prospect for a fight was good.

Giraldus was careful to be first upon the scene on the following Sunday, the day appointed for the dedication. Two of the local clergy proved faithless and had hidden the keys, which were at length, however, produced, and the Archdeacon entering the church, ordered the bells to be rung, and said Mass. He then sent forward some of his clergy as a deputation to meet the Bishop, and inform him that if he came to Kerry as a friend and neighbour he would receive him with every mark of hospitality; but otherwise he desired him not to proceed. His lordship replied to the effect that he was coming as Bishop of the Diocese to dedicate the church, and there was now no doubt about the critical nature of the situation. Giraldus, leaving his clergy and attendants inside, went out hurriedly to meet his rival at the entrance to the churchyard, and as soon as they were face to face a hot dispute was immediately commenced. One hears nothing of the men at arms or the encounter would have degenerated into blood-letting and be scarcely worth the telling. As it was, however, Church history might be ransacked for a more edifying scene. For the Bishop of St. Asaph, having exhausted his arguments and vocabulary, thought the time had come to pass from words to action. So he dismounted from his horse, put on his mitre, gripped his pastoral staff, rallied his clerical attendants, and gave the word to march for the church door. The country people had gathered in their hundreds, and the moment must have been an exciting one when a second procession of clergy, arrayed in surplices and bearing lighted candles and a cross, issued from the building and advanced

against the others. The Bishop, who had threatened excommunication, was now informed by the Archdeacon that two could play at that game, an assertion the truth of which was quickly demonstrated: for they both proceeded to fall to, not with sword or buckler, but with strident sentences of excommunication, one against the other. Giraldus, however, had yet a trump card to play, for he had possession of the bells, which he now caused to be rung in triplets, the outward sign of the rite of excommunication. This move seems to have acted like a flank attack upon the St. Asaph party and to have been altogether too much for them, for they retreated precipitately, their pace accelerated by showers of stones hurled at them by the country people. Thus was the Bishop routed. The victor, in the meantime, made all the clergy take the oath of allegiance to St. David's, and then, beginning to feel magnanimous, sent the crestfallen Prelate, who seems to have been an old schoolfellow, some strong and comforting drink in which to drown his sorrows.

The matter thus happily disposed of, Gerald hied him to Northampton, to report the incident to the king and enlist his sympathy—to say nothing of the fact that the See of St. David's was vacant and that he was the local candidate. The courtiers seem to have thoroughly enjoyed the joke of the Bishop and the Archdeacon excommunicating each other in Kerry churchyard. But the King did not rise to Giraldus's hint concerning St. David's, and he remained Archdeacon and enjoyed, no doubt, all the more leisure for study at Llanthew, to the greater benefit of future generations.

Close to the village of Llanthew, is Peytyngwyn, once owned by our old friend Davy Gam, and the site where, presumably, stood that house of his which Glyndwr burnt in such exulting fashion after the intended attempt on his life at Machynlleth. This was the only occasion on which history or tradition records the great chieftain to have broken into verse. He is said to have hurled an impromptu Englyn at the head of Davy's

disconsolate bailiff as he watched the flames crackling from the roof of his imprisoned master's mansion: it has been thus Englished.

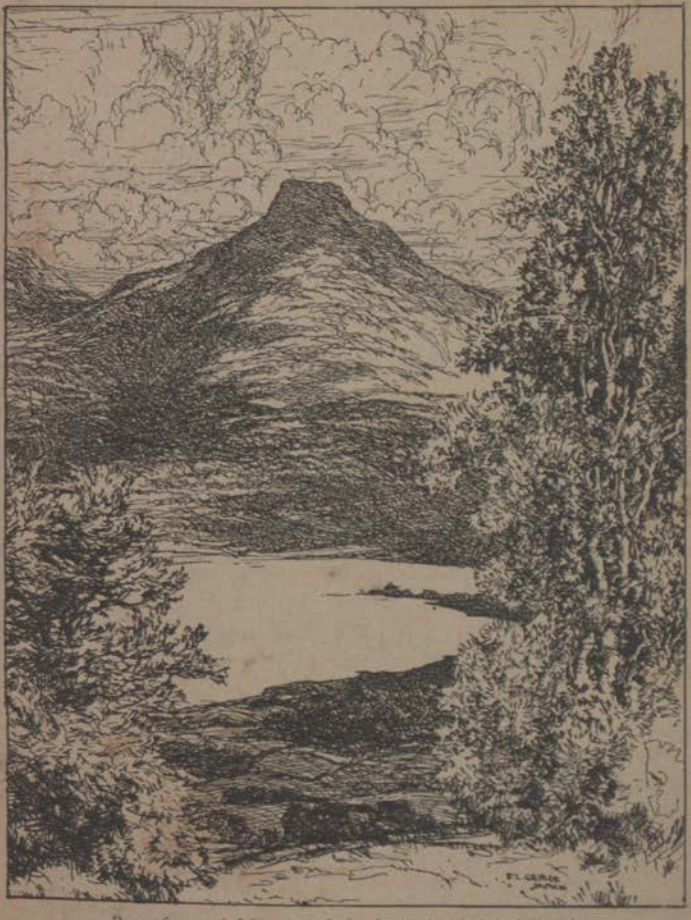
> "Canst thou a little red man descry?
> Looking around for his dwelling fair.
> Tell him it under the bank doth lie
> And its brow the mark of a coal doth wear."

Here, too, within a few hundred yards, is a tenement called Standel, where the flag of Henry VII. was unfurled when Rhys ap Thomas marched his men through here to Shrewsbury and Bosworth field. Within a stone's throw is a cottage called Troed-yr-harn, a corruption of Tref-trehearn, once the house of that ill-fated Trehearn whose assassination on the road near here by William de Braose, as we related in a former chapter, set all Wales agog.

But we must get out of this country, or we shall be choked with genealogy and tombstones and old manor houses. Let us leave the warm red fields, the herds of fattening Herefords or milking shorthorns, the memories of Gunters and Games, of Walbeoffs and Vaughans, of Powells and Gwyns, and mount up high somewhere and look down upon it. It is not every country as fair as this one that is surrounded by posts of observation of from two to three thousand feet in height and not difficult of ascent; and the reward of such mild enterprise is here exceptional.

It was one exquisite autumn day in last year—an Indian summer day rather—that I journeyed leisurely by Talyllyn, strolled on the banks of Llangorse Lake, saw the old inscribed stone in its charming little church, and finally breasted the ascent of Mynydd Troed.

Now I strongly recommend this mountain, and I do not believe any one ever ascends it. It is only some 2,200 feet high, but it stands out sharply from this group of the Black Mountains, and looks right up the valley facing Brecon, nine miles away. The west front is of sugar-loaf form: the last two or three



Pen-y-fan and Llangorse Lake from the slopes of Trecd.

hundred feet are extremely steep, and the red sandstone has been washed almost bare of turf. The final stage is literally a matter of both hands and feet. But the outlook from the summit, on such a day at any rate as I am now recalling, is quite gorgeous. Far below me, Llangorse Lake, some five miles in circumference, sparkled amid a foreground of woods, meadows and homesteads which glowed with that peculiar richness imparted by the slanting sunlight of an afternoon in late September. A light breeze too was rippling the water, and it is no figure of speech to say that the passing of light clouds across the westering sun caused the lake to glitter at one moment like a sheet of liquid silver, at another like molten gold—both touched in turn by darker cloud shadows which made the glory seem still more lustrous. The thousand pastures of the vale were at this hour and season, and beneath this evening light, at their greenest, the fresh turned fallows at their rosiest, and the stubbles, not yet bleached by autumn frosts, still held their golden tint. The woods, refreshed by recent rains, recalled for a moment the days of June and the beginning of our pilgrimage in the vales of Radnor. But on the mountain slopes above autumn had laid her fiery finger in no uncertain fashion on bracken and bilberry, on heath and bent. Away beyond Llangorse, a silvery thread amid the glowing patchwork, could be seen the glittering streams of Usk, and above them, half in shadow, the entire mass of the Beacon range—its hollows black, its ridges emerald, its precipices quite lurid where their sandstone crests or edges caught the slanting sun.

Now Llangorse, known in former days by the more euphonious name of Llyn Savaddan, is the largest sheet of water in South Wales. Its banks are pastoral and low-lying and its waters are nowhere of great depth. The charm of the nearer scenery and the grand background of mountains redeem its immediate details, which are those of an English mere rather than a Welsh lake. Immense pike prowl in its reedy depths, for though the Llyfni, a trout stream, runs into it and

thence out again to the Wye, the trout seem to have a proper dread of the cannibals of Llangorse, and avoid the lake, holding, no doubt, that the risks they run from them in the Llyfni itself and in the Wye are as great as any self-respecting trout can be expected to take. Boats here ply for hire, and it is a favourite resort of holiday makers from various parts of South Wales in the summer season. In winter it is the haunt of abundance of wild fowl, and a pretty and well-known legend tells how Griffith ap Rhys made these wild visitants bear witness to his birthright before the aggressive Norman lords. For on one occasion when he was riding from Abergavenny to Brecon in the winter time, with Milo, Earl of Hereford and Paine FitzJohn, who represented the Norman conquerors of Brecheiniog, they all took note of the unusual flocks of fowl upon the lake. There had apparently been some banter between these scions of the old race and the new as to their respective titles to the soil, and Milo said mockingly to Griffith, "There is an ancient saying in Wales that if the natural Prince of this country coming to this lake order the birds to sing, they will obey him." Griffith then suggested that the Earl, as the undoubted owner of it at the moment, should try his luck. So Milo and his friend proceeded to invoke the birds, but without effect. Then Griffith, feeling that his reputation was at stake, went about the business with becoming solemnity. For, dismounting from his horse, he prostrated himself upon the ground towards the east as if about to engage in battle, and with eyes and hands uplifted to heaven, prayed devoutly to the Lord. Then rising up and making the Sign of the Cross, he spoke aloud: "Almighty God, who knowest all things, declare here Thy power this day. If Thou hast caused me to descend lineally from the natural princes of South Wales, I command these birds in Thy Name to declare it." And immediately the fowl upon Savaddan began to beat the water with their thousand wings, and with a great outcry thus proclaiming their recognition of the old princes of South Wales. The impression made on Milo

and Paine seems to have been considerable, for Giraldus, who no doubt heard the story from those who knew them personally, tells us that they went to Court on purpose to relate it, and that King Henry replied, "By the death of Christ" (a favourite oath of his) "it is not a matter of so much wonder, for although by our great authority we commit acts of violence and wrong against these people, yet they are known to be the rightful inheritors of the land."

The legend of a submerged city was another treasured possession of Savaddan in ancient days, and in the twelfth century most certainly, and probably for a long time afterwards, the inhabitants frequently saw buildings, pastures, gardens, and orchards beneath its waters, which also had a sinister habit of turning the colour of blood. We can plainly see, too, from the top of Troed, the embattled tower of Llangorse church, where it is said the loathly sin-eater, whose horrid art we noticed in Cardiganshire, flourished so vigorously in olden days that neither parson nor bishop could suppress him. A little way off, again, is the ancient little church of Talyllyn, whose sweet-sounding bells are eagerly listened for by those who take their pleasure on the lake.

Still looking down the western slopes of Troed we can mark the little townlet of Talgarth, with Bronllys and its old castle tower beyond, and some way this side of it the old estate and building of Trefecca, a name familiar in every part of the world where Methodists are gathered together as one of the early nurseries of their creed. I alluded to Howel Harris when we were in his fellow revivalist, Daniel Rowlands's, country in Cardiganshire, and, oddly enough, he was born the same year as was George Whitefield, 1714, with whom he was always in complete sympathy. But Howel Harris, quite as energetic and successful an Evangelist and itinerant preacher as the others, gained further celebrity by the establishment of a religious community at Trefecca. He was himself the son of a well-to-do farmer, and was born in the hamlet of Trefecca.

He was intended for the Church, and went to Oxford for a time, but being seized with the religious enthusiasm that made him famous, left College and made his home at Trefecca. From that of a merely local exhorter he passed by degrees to the *rôle* of a popular preacher, and travelled Wales continuously as a vigorous and trumpet-tongued Evangelist. He seems to have excited the ire of the parsons more than any of his contemporaries, though like the rest he was nominally of course a member of the Church of England. Unlike most of them, however, he was not ordained, but more than any of them did he awaken the religious fervour of the Principality. He was pelted, mobbed, beaten, and stoned, and almost killed more than once, but his sufferings very naturally enhanced his popularity and increased his influence. At Trefecca, however, he had peace as well as influence. There, partly with his own means, partly with the help of others, he bought property and built a house and founded his Community. Disciples came from all parts and brought their money to a common fund, sharing all things with one another. Besides the household, which at one time numbered a hundred and twenty souls, many families joined the Connexion, and bought or rented adjoining farms and swelled the numbers at those religious exercises which filled in the hours not devoted to labour. Harris had unquestioned control of this very considerable fund, which of course gave his enemies ample food for malicious accusations that seem to have had no sort of foundation. Among his own followers he was greatly beloved till the day of his death, which occurred in 1773, and it was not till after the loss of their founder and guiding spirit that this curious but successful brotherhood began to decline. The celebrated Methodist, Selina Countess of Huntingdon, was a devoted admirer of Harris. She rented Tredustan Court, a neighbouring residence, and opened it as a college for young men entering the ministry. After many vicissitudes, but still never quite losing touch with the old Connexion, the Trefecca

house, with the addition of a chapel built to Harris's memory, has been now for some time a theological college for the Calvinistic Methodist ministry, a twin institution to the one at Bala, and a very pretty spot it is too.

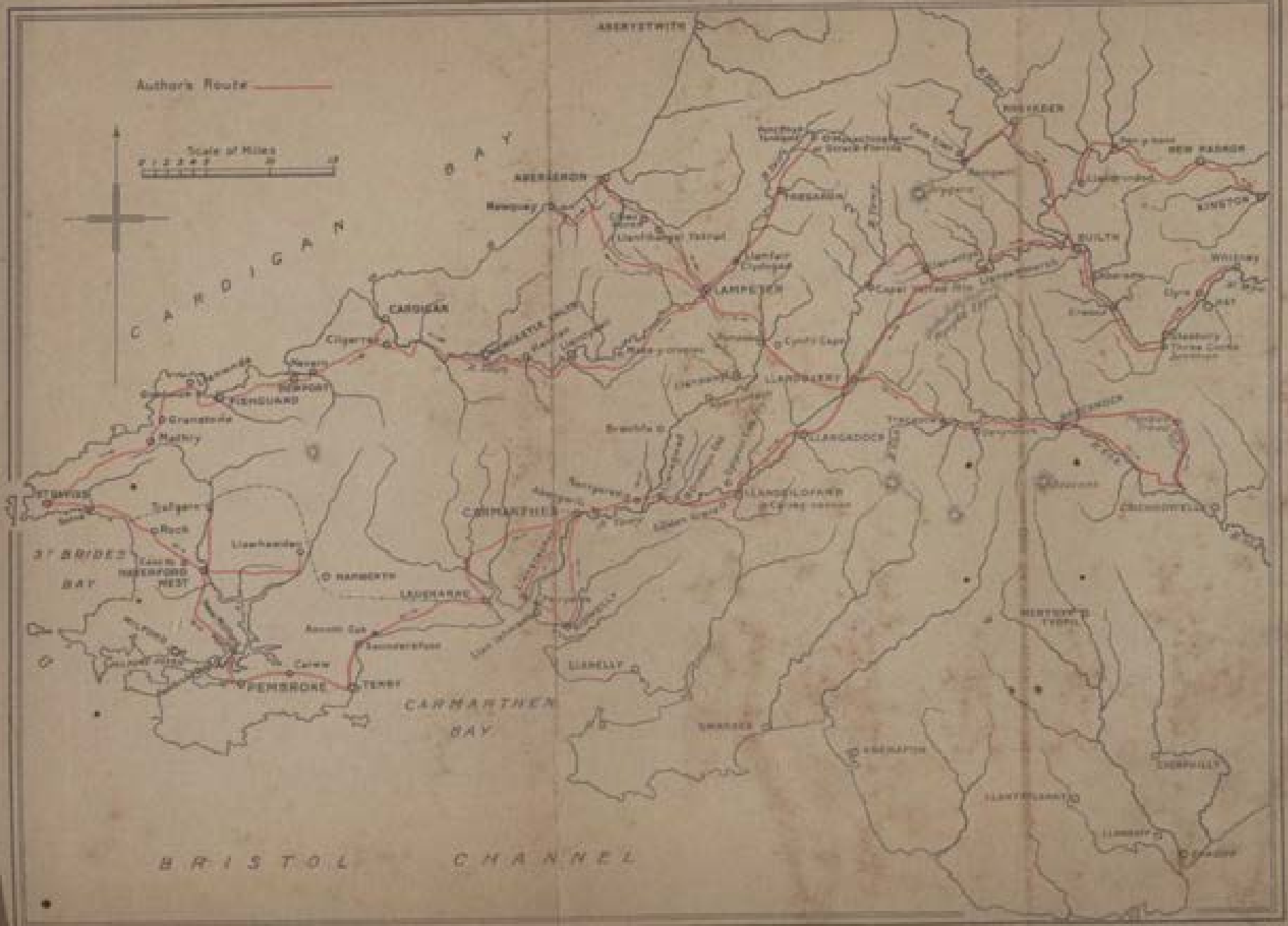
Howel Harris was unconventional even from a Methodist point of view, for when the scare of a French invasion hung over the country, during the Seven Years' War, and in the middle of his monastic and evangelistic work, he became an Ensign in the County Militia, and took twenty-four of his people with him as recruits. This proceeding, when one considers his avocations, his engrossing interests and peculiar position, and his persecution by the State Church, surely shows a broad and patriotic mind. But even this single-minded performance could not conciliate some respectable persons who lived near his time. Our old friend Dr. Malkin is evidently quite pleased that though hitherto nothing could be said against Howel Harris's honesty, yet at the time of completing his tour some rumours had reached him that looked more promising for the orthodox circle, who would have given a great deal to prove him a scoundrel. Theophilus Jones writes in the same disappointed strain, and perhaps we should all have done the same had we been airing our views in the year 1800. We will take leave, however, of the "Luther of Wales," by recording the fact that 20,000 people attended his funeral in Talgarth church, and that no charge graver than a preference for open-air eloquence was ever seriously brought against him even by his enemies, and such a charge to most of us nowadays seems hardly compatible with sanity. The mansion of Tregunter, covering the site where Bernard de Newmarch's Gunters lived for centuries, we can also see plainly. It was built by Howel Harris's brother, who made a fortune as an army clothier in the Seven Years' War, but had no part nor lot so far as I know in Howel's schemes.

Up here on the top of Troed, however, there are ample traces of a period and a people whose industry was mainly the aristocratic one of killing somebody or being killed; remains of

what are called in Wales "Cytiau Gwaeddelod," or Irishmen's huts, *i.e.* the round huts of loose stone used on these hill-top forts at a time not yet agreed upon by antiquaries. They were places of defence to retire to at periods of peril no doubt, when the normal abodes among the forests below were no longer safe. I have not seen these stone huts on Troed mentioned in any book on the country, or met any one in the neighbourhood who knows of them, but I have no doubt they have been located by South Wales archæologists. I do not think we could well find a fitter spot for closing our pilgrimage than this glorious pinnacle of Mynydd Troed. We may, it is true, look wistfully to the south-east, where Penallt and Pencerrig, the Sugar-loaf and the Blorenge cutting our skyline, look down upon the lower but scarcely less beautiful reaches of the Usk. Indeed from Talybont to Crickhowel, a stretch of eight miles, and from Crickhowel again down to Abergavenny, lofty hills press on either bank of the widening but still impetuous river. A continuous chain of country seats, of glowing parklands and noble timber fill the narrow valley mile after mile or deck its lower slopes. The broad Usk, always swiftly rushing, often wreathed in foam, urges, through shadow and sunshine through wood and parkland, its strenuous way. No valley in all Wales perhaps has been more richly decked by wealth and taste as this portion of the Vale of Usk, and few could repay such attention better. For rising high on either side, in fine contrast to the luxuriance beneath, draped in heather and sometimes buttressed with shining rock; often bold in outline and always wild in character, the mountains meet the sky at an elevation that keeps the background conspicuously Welsh in scale and character for all the luxury that flourishes below.

But the very fact of this Crickhowel portion of the vale, though Brecon territory, being nowadays so English in character may be some compensation for our inability to follow it here. For Wales and the Welsh have been the immediate objects of this little journey. And as I have already said, with so many

landmarks that we have passed or lingered by in the course of it, now visible as we stand in the autumn sunshine on the peak of Troed, no fitter place could well be found for taking leave of my reader and of our subject. For here we may trace the windings of the Wye northward as well as of the Usk beneath us, our sight may range far over the sunny wastes of Radnor forest, or, travelling westward along the Epynt Hills, catch the dim summits of the Carmarthen moors. And as we look down once more upon the Vale of Usk, with Llyn Savaddan shining like a jewel in its bosom, and the noble beacons of old Brycheiniog growing in stature and mystery before a drooping sun, one cannot wonder that Henry Vaughan found inspiration here, or that the very wild ducks of Llangorse felt sympathy for the despoiled descendant of its ancient owners.


Author's Route
Scale of Miles
CARDIGAN BAY
ABERYSTWITH
ABERAERON
Newquay
CARDIGAN
Cilgerran
Newport
FISHGUARD
Granstone
Mathry
ST DAVIDS
Trefgarn
Rock
ST BRIDES BAY
HAVERFORD WEST
Llawhaeden
NARBERTH
LAUGHARNE
Carew
PEMBROKE
TENBY
CARMARTHEN BAY
CARMARTHEN
LLANELLY
SWANSEA
LLANDEILOFAWR
LLANGADOCK
LLANDOVERY
Brecknock
LAMPETER
TREGARON
Llanfair Clydogau
Cynfil Cape
Capel Tetrad Hill
BUILTH
KINGTON
NEW RADNOR
Whitney
Clyre
Eresoul
Three Cocks Junction
CRICKHOWELL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
CHEPHILLY
LLANTRISANT
LLANDAFF
BRISTOL CHANNEL

INDEX

INDEX

A

Abbey-Cwmhir, 36, 99
Alterayron, 213, 234, 244, 246
Aberbran, 375
Abercamlais, 375
Aberdare, 392
Aberedw, 59, 61, 66
Abergavenny, 46, 409
Aberglasney, 171
Abergwessin, 112, 113, 114, 239
Abergwili, 174-5
Abermarlais, 145-6
Aberystwith, 9, 82, 92, 211, 212
Ackland, Major, 306
Adpar, 269
Amroth Castle, 364
Arddudval, 236
Arnulph of Montgomery, 289, 337
Arthur's Knights, 168
Arwystli, district of, 82
Ayron, Vale of, 234-246, 253
Awbreys, The, 85, 373

B

Bala College, 212
Barlow, Bishop, 339, 342
Beaufort, Duke of, 185-188, 374
Beck, Bishop, 219
Beulah, 113
Birmingham Waters-works, 88
Black Mixon, 21
Black Mountains, 22, 39, 40, 41, 45, 46, 52, 108, 143, 374, 396
Blorenge, The, 397
Borrow, George, 136, 139, 171, 203, 229
Boughwood, 55, 56, 95, 96
Bradley, Rev. Charles, 55
Brân, river, 134
Brecon, 16, 75-77, 184, 382-388
Brecon Beacons, 108, 380, 388-393
Brecon Church, 383-385
Breconshire, 50-130, 153, 366-410
Brefi, river, 219
Brestgarn, 309
Brilly, mountain, 39
Brychan, 376-377
Buckingham, Duke of, 385
Buckingham, Dukes of, 48
Builth, 61-76
Builth Rocks, 74
Builth Road, 74, 92, 98
Bull, Bishop, 330
Bullens, The, 373
Bullslaughter bay, 348
Bwlch, The, 397

C

Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, 273, 280, 281, 320
Caerleon, 220, 324, 376
Camddwr, river, 220
Canwyl corph, The, 253
Carbery, Earls of, 169-170, 269, 352
Cardigan, 277-283
Cardigan, bay, 246
Carews, The, 356
Carew Castle, 355-360
Carmarthen, 146-148, 177-191, 199
Carmarthen Vans, 143, 366, 392
Carningley, 295
Carregwasted, 301, 311-313
Castle Martin, 337, 345-348
Castle Malgrois, 277
Caw, 377
Cawdor, Earls of, 169, 170, 269, 304, 305
Cayo, 202, 254
Cefn y bedd, 61, 98
Cellan, 216
Cenarth, 272-273
Cennin, brook, 162
Cerrig Cennin Castle, 162-164
Charles I., 53, 84, 87
Charles of Bala, 239

Cheltenham, 9
Chepstow, 58
Cil y cwm, 134
Cistercians, 226–227
Claerwen, river, 88, 92
Clares, The, 17
Clare, Gilbert de, 280
Clareston, 345
Cleddau, river, 332, 342
Clifford Castle, 40
Clifford, Roger, 40
Clynderwen Junction, 299
Clyro, 43, 44
Clywedog, river, 22, 36
Coedmore, 279
Colby Moore, 353
Colva, 9, 24, 42
Corndu, 85, 91
Cothi Valley, 200
Craig y foel, 85
Craig Cerrig Gleisiad, 388
Cregina, 42
Cribyn, 90
Crickhowell, 49, 396, 409
Croesgoch, river, 316
Cromwell, 350, 354
Crug, 376
Cunedda, 376
Cwm Dauddwr, 91
Cwm Elan, 89–91
Cwn Annwm, 253
Cynghordy, 22, 134

D

Dafydd, Prince, 60–61
Dafydd of Bettws Bledrws, 165
Dafydd ap Gwilym, 229–233
Davies, Capt., 304
Davy Gam, 379, 401
Dderw, The, 55
de Braose, William, 11, 43, 44, 46, 47, 65, 78, 381, 382, 402
Derwyd, 162
Desmond, family, 337
Devereux, Sir John, 124
Dewisland, 290, 337
Dinas head, 296, 300, 313
Dinas, hill, 123, 142
Dinely, Thos., 185–188, 375
Dolau, 21
Dolau Cothy, 202–203
Doldowlod, 79
Dolecoed, hotel, 109
Doleven, 79
Dorthea, river, 123
Dowlais, 392
Downton, 14
Drayton, the poet, 59
Dryslwyn Castle, 172–173
Dulas, R., 26
Dyer, the poet, 169–172
Dynevor, 146–159
Dynevor, Lord, 162
Dyvennoc, 371

E

Edward I., 15, 16, 82, 135, 141, 173, 228
Edward IV., 337
Edw, river, 22, 26, 56, 57
Einion, 285
Elan (river), 82–92
Elineon, 83
Elirdir Ddu, 193–196
Ellen, the Terrible, 6, 7
Ellineth, mountains, 108, 211
Elvael, district of, 43, 83, 153
Epynt, hills, 22, 62, 63, 66, 69, 73, 99, 100, 102, 108, 134, 374, 393, 396, 410
Erwood, 56, 57
Evans, Rev. Theophilus, 100, 106, 107

F

Falcondale, 235
Fanfrynach, 388
Fenton, the Pembrokeshire historian, 297
Ferrars, Bishop, 182
Ffos-y-ffin, 246
Fishguard, 288, 297–300
Fitzhamon, 15, 135, 373
Flemings, the, 289, 290
Forest Inn, 21
Francton, Adam de, 61, 99
Freeman, E. A., 383
French, Invasion of Wales by, 299
Freshwater, bay, 350
Freystrop, 345

G

Gaer, 372–375
Games, The, 375–379, 384
Garth, village, 99
Garth, hill, 57
Garthmadryn, 372
Gerald de Windsor, 273, 276, 289, 350, 355
Gerard, Colonel, 270
Gilpin, Rev., 57
Giraldus Cambrensis, 83, 84, 95, 158, 208, 216, 282, 285, 286, 310, 348, 399, 400, 401
Gladestry, 9
Glamorgan, 15, 135, 149, 154
Glanusk, Lord, 56
Glasbury, 21, 48
Glascombe, 9, 26, 41, 84
Glyndwr, Owen, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20, 38, 45, 48, 168, 181, 182, 228, 337, 340, 350, 364, 379, 401
Golden Grove, 164, 169, 170, 171
Goodwick, 299, 309–313
Gower, Bishop, 327, 330
Gower, promontory of, 197
Granston, 313

Green Grove, 240
Greville, George, 346
Griffith ap Llewellyn, 373
Griffith ap Nicholas, 145, 148
Griffith ap Rhys, 276, 405
Griffith Grûg, 229
Griffith Vaughan, 228
Grongar Hill, 171–172
Guest, Lady C., 137
Gunters, The, 373
Gustave Doré, 163
Gwaine, river, 297
Gwbert, 284
Gwenllian, Princess, 193
Gwent, 154, 168
Gwenwynwyn, Prince, 44
Gwernyfed, 55
Gwili, river, 174, 199
Gwladys of Kidwelly, 191, 196
Gwrthreynion, 81, 82, 83, 153
Gwydderig, river, 141, 365
Gwynedd, 153, 154
Gwyn, Howel, 55
Gwynnes, The, 100, 369

H

Hamilton, Lady, 346
Hanter Hill, 9
Harold II., 329
Harpton, 13
Harris, Howel, 239, 406–408
Havards, 373
Haverfordwest, 299, 307, 331–334, 338, 340, 345
Hay, 44–48
Hayston, 345
Henfynyw, 246
Hengeraint, 244
Henllan, 268, 270
Henry I., 272, 289, 339
II., 46, 185, 290, 329, 330, 337, 348
III., 17, 43, 47
IV., 12, 13, 228, 379
V., 228, 379
VII., 183, 184, 350, 356, 402
VIII., 17, 152, 319, 337
Herbert, Sir William, 358, 359
Hereford, 9
Hereford, Lord, 55
Hergest Court, 6, 7
Hergest Ridge, 6, 7
Horsley, Bishop, 330
Horton, Bishop, 330
Houghton, 346
Howel, Bishop, 100
Howel, Dda, 157
Huntington, 7
Huntingdon, Countess of, 407
Huw, Gadarn, 219

I

Irfon Valley, 22, 99–119
Ithon river, 29, 78, 94, 96
Ivor Hoel, 230
Ivybush Hotel, 180

J

Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, 350
Johnes, of Dolau Cothy, 202, 203–218
Johnes, of Hafod, 231
John of Gaunt, 327
Johnson, Dr., 172
Jones, Kilsby, 32
Jones, Theophilus, 111
Johnston, 345

K

Kemble, Charles, 387
Kemes, Lordship of, 289, 290, 317–337
Kensington, Lord, 72
Kerry, hills, 78
Kerry Church, 399–401
Kerry sheep, 115
Kidwelly Castle, 191–196
Kilgerran, 277–279
Kington, 2, 5, 8, 9
Knappan, game of, 319–323
Knighton, 11
Knox, Colonel, 303

L

Lampeter, 199, 200 206–215, 256, 257
Lamphey Palace, 357, 360
Laud, Bishop, 338
Laugharne Castle, 364
Laugharne, Col., 352–354
Leland, 44
Lewis, Sir George Cornewall, 14, 19
Lewis, Glyn Cothi, 202–206
"Little England," 334
Llanaeron, 243
Llanbadarn-fawr, 229
Llancavan, 83
Llandegley, 24
Llandewi-brefi, 218
Llandilo-fawr, 141, 151
Llandingat Church, 138
Llandisiliogogo, 251
Llandovery, 125, 135–141, 258, 259 365
Llandovery Castle, 139
Llandrindod, 29–33, 75, 93
Llandybie, 166
Llandyssil, 199, 250, 266
Llanfair-ar-y bryn, 138
Llanfair Clydogau, 214
Llanfihangel-ystryd, 236
Llanfihangll-nant-Melin, 20

Llangadock, 143, 145
Llangammarch, 100, 101
Llangeitho, 239, 240
Llangorse, 55, 95, 402–406
Llangunnor, 185
Llangurig, 82
Llanllawer Mt., 295, 300
Llanllear, 236
Llanoyre, 56
Llansaintffraed, 395
Llanstephan, 197
Llanthew, 397, 399
Llanwenog, 253, 266, 267
Llanwnda, 304, 305, 310
Llanwrda, 143, 200
Llanwrtyd, 101, 105, 106–113, 130
Llanybyther, 259–260
Llanynis, 99
Llawhaden, 340–343
Llech lavar, 329, 330
Llechryd, 276–279, 282
Llewelyn i, 174
Llewelyn ii, 47, 81, 154, 228, 269, 293, 382
Llewelyn iii, 59, 60, 61, 65, 99
Lloid, John of Towy, 66
Lloyd, Sir Martin, 293
Lloyds, of Maes y felin, 257
Llwynderw, 117, 119, 121
Llwyn-madoc, 113
Llyfni R., 54–404
Llyn Berwyn, 120
Llyn cwm llwch, 392
Llyn Edwal, 236
Llynhilyn, 22
Llyny van vach, 366–369
Llys Cynan, 78
Llyswen, 55
Llywel, 369
London water supply, 129
Loventium, 216
Lucy family, 387
Lydstep, 362

M

Madoc ap Cadwgan, 274
Maen-y-morwynion, 376
Maeslwch Castle, 48
Maesycrigiau, 260
Maes-y-ved, 10
Mahael, 381
Mainwaring, Bishop, 387
Maitlands, 100
Malkin, Dr., 24, 42, 56–58, 136
Manorbier Castle, 348–360
Mansel of Margam, 193
Marchell, 371
Martin de Tours, 288–292
Matchway, The, 26, 56
Mathry, 313, 315
Maurice de Londres, 193
Melenydd, 78
Menevia, 324
Meredith ap Griffith, 159
Merlin, 324, 329, 330
Merlin's Hill, 174
Merthyr Tydvil, 392
Meyrick, Sir J., 239, 265
Michaelchurch, 42
Middletons, The, 173, 174
Milford Haven, 345, 346, 350
Milford, New, 341, 346, 352, 354
Milo Fitz Walter, 251, 381, 405
Moat Lane, 92
Monmouth, 16
Montgomery, 16, 94
Moore, General, 71
Morfydd, 230, 231, 238
Morgan, Bishop, 329
Mortimer, Sir E., 11, 12, 13, 18, 159
Mortimer of Trehowell, 303–309
Mortimers, The, 15, 17, 78
Mortimer's Cross, 148

N

Naseby, Battle of, 10
Nash, M., 182
Nautgarredig, 179, 200
Nautgwylt, 88
Nelson, Lord, 173
Nest of Kidwelly, 191–196
Nest, Princess, 272–276, 337
Nevern, 288–291
Newbridge, 78
Newcastle Emlyn, 199 268 271
Newmarch, Bernard de, 16, 46, 135, 373, 375, 380, 381
Newport, 292–295
Newquay, 246, 250
New Radnor, 10, 13, 18, 20, 61
Newton, 152, 162
Newton House, 377
Nott, General, 181

O

Ogor Dinas, 164
Old Radnor, 10, 13, 18, 20
Ollivant, Bishop, 209
Owen ap Cadwgan, 274
Owen ap Griffith, 147
Owen de Galles, 166
Owen Gwynedd, 81, 154
Owen, George, of Henllys, 293, 316–323, 336
Owen Lawgoch, 166
Owen, Sir John, 353

P

Paine, Fitzjohn, 405
Painscastle, 43
Pant y dwr, 78, 81

Patrick de Canton, 269
Paxton, Sir W., 173
Peacock, Thomas Love, 155
Pembroke, Marshall Earl of, 279
Pembroke dock, 16, 17, 346, 347, 354
Pembroke town, 116, 349–355
Pembrokeshire, 286
Penainglas, 313
Pencader, 199, 260
Pencaer, 309
Penpont, 375
Penry, John, 100
Pentengwyn, 401
Penybont, 29
Penyfan, 388–390
Peters, Hugh, 354
Peterwell, 236–256, 257
Phillips, Nellie, 301
Picton, General, 181
Pilleth, Battle of, 11, 12, 13, 38
Plinlimon, 82, 92, 94, 211
Pont yr yspryd glyn, 196
Pont Llanio, 216
Pontrhydfendigaiad, 224, 225
Powys, 16, 153
Poyer, Col., 352–354
Precelly, Hills, 288, 300, 317
Presteign, 10, 13
Price, Mrs., of Glan Irfon, 73
Price, Rev. Thos., 72, 239
Price, Sir John, 537, 384
Pritchard, Vicar, 137, 138, 257
Pumpsaint, 202

R

Radnor Sheep, 23
Radnorshire, 39–100
Radnor forest, 9
Ranulph, Earl of Chester, 251
Rhayader, 23, 74, 77, 79, 80, 84, 96
Rhondda Vale, 392
Rhyd ap Tudor, 83, 226, 272, 284
Rhydspence, 38
Rhydymeirch, 220
Rhys ap Griffith, 159
Rhys ap Thomas, Sir, 145, 183, 184, 269, 356, 360, 374, 402
Rhys Gethin, 12
Richard II., 337
Richard III., 183, 184
Richards, Mr., M.P., 223
Richmond, Earl of, 328
Ridgeway, The, 360
Roderic the Great, 152
Roos, 337, 347
Rosamond, Fair, 46
Rosebush, 301
Rowlands, Daniel, 239, 240, 406
Rufus, William, 15, 135, 289

S

Sandersfoot, 364
Sarn, Helen, 216, 218
Savaddan, Llyn, 404
Sawdde, R., 145
Scott, Sir Walter, 63
Scurlock, Thos., 185
Senni, R., 145
Severn, R., 94
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 89, 91, 238
Shrewsbury, 105
Siddons, Mrs., 307
Solva, 333
Sommergill brook, 20
Sports, Book of, 136
St. Asaph, 325
Do., Bishop of, 398, 400, 401
St. Clears, 181, 364
St. David's Cathedral, 302, 313, 324–331
St. David's, Bishops of, 176
St. David, 219, 328
St. Dogmaels, 284
St. Fagan's, 353
St. Gowan's Head, 348
St. Harmon, 81, 84
St. Ishmaels, 197
St. Mary's, Brecon, 385
St. Patrick's Monastery, 325
Stackpole, 348
Standel, 402
Stanhope, Lady Hester, 71, 73, 107
Steele, Sir Richard, 184
Strata Florida Abbey, 93, 213–228
Strongbow, Earl, 337
Strumble Head, 303, 313
Sugar loaf, 131
Synod Inn, 251

T

Taff, R., 364
Talgarth, 397
Talley Abbey, 233
Talsarn, 236
Talybont, 396, 409
Talyllyn, 394, 402, 406
Tarrel, R., 390
Tate, General, 299
Taylor, Jeremy, 170
Teify, R., 94
Teify valley, 200
Tenby, 360–364
Tewdrig, 371
Thirlwall, Bishop, 209
Thomas ap Griffith, 146
Three Cocks Inn, 51–54
Three Cocks Junction, 49, 51
Tibetot, Robert de, 173
Tintern, 58
Towy Estuary, 197
Towy, R., 112, 121, 364
Towy, Vale of, 131–200
Trecastle, 141, 365, 369, 374
Tredegar, Lord, 55

Tredustan, 417
Trefecca, 406, 407
Trefgarn, Owen, 340
Trefgarn Rocks, 340
Tregaron, 116, 124, 214, 220-224
Tregaron bog, 224
Tregold, 55
Trehowel, 304, 309, 374
Trichrug, 243
Troed, mountain, 412, 460
Twed yr ham, 402

U

Urien of Is-Cennin
Usk, fishing, 385
Usk, Vale of, 371-410

V

Valerie, Maud St., 46
Vanog, 123
Vaughan, Bishop, 329
Vaughan, Trehearne, 43
Vaughan of Tretower, 379

W

Walbee, Moll, 47
Walbeof, 373
Wales, Old Divisions of, 153
Wales, South, old boundaries, 153
Walton, 9
Walwyn, 46, 99
Water-break-its-neck, 21
Welford, 66
Wesley, Charles, 100
Westbrook, Harriet, 90
Whittney, Lord, 146-148, 374
Whitefield, George, 406
William the Conqueror, 288, 329
Williams, of Pantycelin, 239
Williams, Rowland, 209
Wiston, 340-344
Witney, 38
Wolfe's leap, 117, 119
Wordsworth, 63
Wye Valley, 37-100
Wynn, Sir John, 124

Y

Ystwyth, R., 94
Ystryd ffin, 123, 142
Ystryd, Llanfihangel, 240

THE END

R. CLAY AND SONS, LTD., BREAD ST. HILL, E.C., AND BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN NORTH WALES.

Extra Crown 8vo, 6s.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

JOSEPH PENNELL AND HUGH THOMSON.

PALL MALL GAZETTE.—"The book is crammed, surfeited, with picturesque detail, every natural and historical feature is dwelt upon with affectionate interest and consummate skill of description, and the drawings are more than adequate. To read this fine book makes us eager to visit every hill and every valley that Mr. Bradley describes with such tantalising enthusiasm. It is a work of inspiration, vivid, sparkling, and eloquent—a deep well of pleasure to every lover of Wales."

ACADEMY.—"May be regarded as a standard work for all visitors to North Wales."

ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.—"A worthy successor to Mr. A. H. Norway's 'Highways and Byways in Devon and Cornwall,' and, like that delightful book, has the inestimable advantage of illustration by Mr. Joseph Pennell and Mr. Hugh Thomson—an ideal partnership."

DAILY CHRONICLE.—"The illustrations are supplied by Mr. Joseph Pennell and Mr. Hugh Thomson, and it would be very difficult to see how Messrs. Macmillan could improve so strong a combination of artistic talent. . . . This book will be invaluable to many a wanderer through the plains and mountains of North Wales."

STANDARD.—"Written with knowledge and humour. . . . Nothing but praise is due to the pictures of places, and humorous incidents of olden times, with which Mr. Joseph Pennell and Mr. Hugh Thomson have enlivened a welcome and artistic book."

GLOBE.—"Must be acceptable to all lovers of the beautiful in art and nature."

GRAPHIC.—"Charmingly illustrated. . . . Mr. Bradley is a writer of no mean literary powers. He not merely knows all that there is to know about the various places visited, but he can serve it up in a fascinating manner. . . . Altogether a fascinating book, either to read at home by the fire, or to carry with one when treading the same ground."

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.—"Mr. Bradley's book is thoroughly readable and entertaining."

DAILY GRAPHIC.—"All there is to know about the country he knows. If there is a legend to make a locality more interesting he can tell it you. Local characteristics and sketches of character he never misses, and one can imagine no more delightful companion for a Welsh tour than this author or his book. . . . An excellent volume."

WEEKLY SUN.—"Mr. Bradley writes with almost the humour and go of Thackeray in his 'Irish Sketch Books.' . . . Mr. Pennell's brilliant little sketches, in wash, pen or pencil, are well reproduced, and Mr. Hugh Thomson gives us the familiar old world charm of his best drawings."

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

OWEN GLYNDWR.

Crown 8vo, 5s.

["*Heroes of the Nations*" *Series.*

TIMES.—"Mr. Bradley's delightful book fills a long felt need in Welsh history. His broad and sympathetic treatment and the generous appreciation of his subject should make it doubly acceptable to Welshmen."

SPEAKER.—"The story of Owen Glyndwr is well and brightly told by Mr. Bradley, who writes of him with critical sympathy. . . . An excellent bit of condensed narrative; it gives the reader such an insight into the condition of mediæval Wales as will enable him to realise the character and meaning of Owen's rising."

ATHENÆUM.—"Is sure to be welcomed and appreciated by Welshmen universally, while its spirited and realistic record of one of Shakespeare's immortals ought to commend the work to all who admire the heroic, whether in soldier, patriot, or statesman."

SPECTATOR.—"Not only well written but a monument of unpretentious research. And the Welsh hero has never appeared more heroic than in these accurate pages."

GUARDIAN.—"How well he fought, how widely his arms conquered, Mr. Bradley tells with vigour and eloquence. His tale is one of the most stirring in later mediæval history."

DAILY NEWS.—"His strange career is well and graphically described. The author's knowledge of Welsh history, his familiarity with the country, enable him to do justice to a subject which has received scant attention from historians."

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, LONDON.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN THE LAKE DISTRICT.

Extra Crown 8vo, 6s.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOSEPH PENNELL.

MORNING POST.—"On all manner of subjects Mr. Bradley gossips pleasantly, and his pages have an undefinable literary flavour that possesses special fascinations of its own."

GUARDIAN.—"We have, till Mr. Bradley gave it us, wanted a single book where we should find all these things expressed for us in prose which should do something like justice to the sentiment the district inspires. With the aid of Mr. Pennell, Mr. Bradley has interpreted the various aspects of lake, mountain, castle and abbey, so fully and artistically, as to leave little to be desired. We felt nothing but the keenest enjoyment in every page we read from first to last."

DAILY CHRONICLE.—"A book which everyone who loves the Lakes, or intends to visit them in a quiet spirit, will like to read."

ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.—"A notable edition—an engaging volume, packed with the best of all possible guidance for tourists. For the most part the artist's work is as exquisite as anything of the kind he has done."

DAILY TELEGRAPH.—"Mr. Bradley has done his work amazingly well. His heart has been in his subject. Mr. Joseph Pennell has found abundant scope for his graceful art."

BLACK AND WHITE.—"The book is one which delights the man who knows his Lakes well. To the unhappy man who has not visited this wonderland of England, it will be a scourge whose sting will not depart until he has made his pilgrimage."

ECHO.—"The next best thing to visiting the Lakes is to read Mr. Bradley's delightful pages and imagine yourself there."

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.—"It is a little difficult to explain what a good book Mr. Bradley's is. Most of the words that would serve best to describe it have been used up in exercising critical charity to rubbish. It is as if a good play were written in America, and the American Press had to chronicle the fact."

DAILY MAIL.—"There is a literary smack about Mr. Bradley's book which entirely dispels any guide book flavour, and the little excursions, historical, humorsome, and personal are alike delightful. Mr. Pennell's drawings are something more than clever."

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

WOLFE.

With a Portrait. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d.

["*English Men of Action*" *Series.*

Also an edition in *The Prize Library*. Illustrated. Crown 8vo, *2s. 6d.* Cloth elegant, gilt edges, *3s. 6d.*

DAILY TELEGRAPH.—"Mr. A. G. Bradley, the author of this admirable memoir, has only done justice to its subject by executing a faithful and elaborate word-picture of a man whose disposition and conduct were not only faultless, but supremely noble."

MORNING POST.—"In entrusting this volume to Mr. Bradley the editors have done wisely, and their wisdom has been rewarded by a charming biography. . . . Mr. Bradley's style is especially engaging. His descriptions are graphic without being in the least extravagant. This book is in every sense worthy of its place in an admirable series."

TIMES.—"It appears to us to be very well done. The narrative is easy, the facts have been mastered and well marshalled, and Mr. Bradley is excellent both in his biographical and his geographical details."

NATIONAL OBSERVER.—"Mr. Bradley has brought to bear a dramatic sense and literary power—athletic, easy, always in measure to the epic—and a faculty for visualising scenes and events, that altogether make this volume notable even at a time when amongst our ablest men there is a rivalry in the making of little books."

ARMY AND NAVY GAZETTE.—"Mr. A. G. Bradley's 'Wolfe' will rank among the best volumes in the 'Men of Action' Series. . . . There could be no better literary portrait of him in brief form. It is at once careful and accurate and well balanced, filled with the evidence of sound judgment, and conveyed in a terse and clear literary style."

ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.—"It is a most interesting life clearly and ably described."

DAILY CHRONICLE.—"A military biography is apt to be full of wearisome detail and technicalities which bore the reader. This work is absolutely devoid of any such defect, and yet with all its beauty it is not sketchy, but very thorough, the history of Wolfe's times being well set forth, and withal style has not been sacrificed."

GLOBE.—"There is no more interesting volume in the interesting series of which it forms a part."

THE GRAPHIC.—"It makes the eyes glisten and the heart glow."

WESTMINSTER REVIEW.—"Mr. Bradley has done full justice to the subject, and we are sure the book will be widely read."

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

SKETCHES FROM OLD VIRGINIA.

Crown 8vo, 6s.

THE TIMES.—"A very charming series of sketches of Virginia as it was left after the war, still inhabited by a people who had been brought up under the institution of slavery, and who retained the ideas, traditions, the habits, the methods of thought of a system founded upon slavery. . . . Mr. Bradley has caught the sentiment of a region which is full of old world memories, and was still peopled at the time of which he writes by survivors of its old days of easy prosperity. The characters he describes are racy of the soil, and he paints their lives, occupations, and sports with a singularly sympathetic pen, with a gentle and subdued humour, which is finely attuned to the spirit of his theme, with the relish of a sportsman and a genuine appreciation of the more imaginative aspects of scenery."

DAILY TELEGRAPH.—"Mr. Bradley deserves the gratitude of every lover of open air life for this collection of his Virginian Studies which have appeared in Macmillan's and other magazines. His sense of style and humour lifts him far above the ordinary chronicler of woodlands and coverts. . . . The Old Dominion which he is so well qualified to sketch has vanished for ever, and the world is the poorer by the extinction of a picturesque and not ignoble society."

DAILY NEWS.—"Mr. Bradley's sketches of Old Virginia are delightful from first to last. They are the vivid, sympathetic, humorous picture of a social state which has passed away."

SPECTATOR.—"Nowhere have we met with more accurate accounts of the effect of the Great Civil War on the Old Southern States. Mr. Bradley, who clearly knows the 'Social Statics' of the South, paints for us the downfall and decadence of the Old Virginian landed gentry with a tender reminiscent hand. . . . Most agreeable matter for a delightful winter evening by the fireside."

SPEAKER.—"Mr. Bradley has found in the manor houses of the luckless Southron gentry the stuff for a charming book. He has lived and shot and fished among them. He has the descriptive touch, and he succeeds in enabling us to picture what Old Virginia really was like."

SATURDAY REVIEW.—"This is one of the pleasantest volumes that it has been our lot to handle for some time. Its people, its quaint aristocracy, the negroes before and after their emancipation, the 'poor whites,' the architecture, the aspect of the country—the trees, the birds of the air, and the fish of the rivers. All these after reading Mr. Bradley's book are as familiar to us as if we had lived in Virginia for half a life-time. The author has a sense of style and has personality. He is entirely possessed by the spirit of the country which he describes; he catches the lights and shadows that would escape the ordinary observer."

LITERATURE.—"Mr. Bradley has earned our gratitude by republishing in book form these charming studies of life in Old Virginia. . . . These (characters) are portrayed with excellent grace and quiet delightful humour. Throughout the sketches breathes a spirit of loving kindness, of affection for the happier past, of sympathy with nature in all her forms. No lover of sport and scenery and old fashioned ways will read this book without peculiar pleasure."

FIELD.—"Throughout the book is pleasantly written; it contains many quaint stories, and gives an excellent idea of what things were in Virginia at the time of which the author writes. The descriptions of the scenery and the people possess considerable literary merit; and we can commend it to our readers as a most entertaining book."

ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.—"The glory has departed from Old Virginia. And after reading Mr. Bradley's half-sad, half-humorous, wholly sympathetic 'sketches' we find ourselves more than a little inclined to sentimental regret that it should be so."

PALL MALL GAZETTE.—"A very agreeable book."

BIRMINGHAM POST.—"An entertaining volume. The sketches show a masterly hand and are full of humour and pathos."

BROAD ARROW.—"The reappearance of these sketches in their present form will be welcomed by many readers who appreciated the fidelity of description of southern men and manners, the shrewd and sensible views and the quaint and quiet humour displayed in them."

FISHING GAZETTE (R. B. Marston).—"One of the most charming little books imaginable. A series of sketches of scenes, sport and character all admirably done."

MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE FIGHT WITH FRANCE FOR NORTH AMERICA.

SECOND EDITION. Extra Crown 8vo, 6s.

WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS.

TIMES.—"There are references to modern conditions in the America and Canada of to-day which Mr. Bradley handles with great delicacy. . . . The most casual reader will meet with a series of character-sketches in these pages which stand out with cameo-like distinctness."

SPECTATOR.—"Mr. Bradley, who has an easy command of the materials he has mastered, writes as enthusiastic and almost as eloquent English as Macaulay."

ATHENÆUM.—"Mr. Bradley has an interesting and important subject, one for the discussion of which he is well fitted. . . . It is a good book and well worth a careful reading."

OBSERVER.—"This most important, stirring, and even romantic chapter in our history has been most thoroughly dealt with by Mr. Bradley, and his book is one which the historical student will value."

WESTMINSTER GAZETTE.—"It is always a pleasure to hail the second edition of a good book. . . . Such I can but regard as the well-deserved honour of Mr. A. G. Bradley's spirited narrative."

SATURDAY REVIEW.—"Mr. Bradley has produced a most useful and interesting work."

DAILY TELEGRAPH.—"Mr. Bradley is the master of a vigorous style. . . . his judgments are well balanced and convincing . . . his book proves that he possesses all the qualities of an impartial historian."

PALL MALL GAZETTE.—"Mr. Bradley is at his best in this book . . . his story is well told, his explanations are clear, and his descriptions of the various battles are undeniably graphic. . . . It is worthy of the unanimous praise it received on its first appearance alike from the English and American press. . . . We heartily welcome the second edition of this fascinating book."

DAILY NEWS.—"As a truthful, intelligent, and picturesque historian, Mr. Bradley's volume deserves to be cordially recommended to all who desire to know how the British Empire has grown."

DAILY CHRONICLE.—"Those who have studied this colonial drama must applaud the force and vigour with which Mr. Bradley marshals his facts, the brilliancy and directness of his narrative. The reader is held as in a spell."

ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE & CO., LTD., WESTMINSTER.

00066007

Digitized with financial assistance from
Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj
on 20 February, 2020